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In Kashmir, reeling from a cruel April

Mirza Waheed

OPINION

Every year, or at the least every other year, there arrive seasons of killing and mourning in the valley of Kashmir. On Sunday, April 9, elections were held for a parliamentary seat left vacant in the main city of Srinagar after a law-maker resigned in protest against last summer's killings. A majority stayed away, with only 7 percent turning up to vote.

Young Kashmiris — fed up, brutalized, growing up in the most densely militarized zone in the world — surrounded polling stations to protest Indian rule. Some protesters threw stones at the polling booths and the troops stationed there. The troops responded as they do, with shooting, beating and blinding protesters and bystanders alike. Eight people were shot dead. Among those killed was 12-year-old schoolboy, Faizan Fayaz

We have seen brute force before, but India is resorting to even more ferocious tactics to crush protests.

Dar, who was shot in the back of his head, the BBC reported from his village. Dirges rang from Kashmiri homes and graveyards. We have seen this before, like a tragic war film on a loop: young corpses floating on the

shoulders of families and friends for that ultimate journey. Last year, during a four-month siege, nearly 100 people were killed and hundreds blinded, as Indian paramilitaries rained bullets and millions of buckshot pellets on protesting crowds.

Now the response of the Indian state has turned even more ferocious. By the end of the week, three more youths had been killed, including a 17-year-old street vendor whose forehead was cracked open with a bullet. A college campus was raided by paramilitaries in full military gear, accompanied by an armored vehicle, injuring around 50 students.

Earlier in the week, as the Indian Army was patrolling central Kashmir, soldiers chanced upon Farooq Ahmad Dar, a 26-year-old shawl weaver, who was returning home from a funeral prayer. As an artisan, Mr. Ahmad works with his hands, making filigree-like embroidery on "cashmere" shawls. The soldiers assaulted him, wounding his hands and arms.

After the assault, the soldiers tied him up to the front of a jeep, strapped on a handwritten placard and paraded him through several villages for hours as a live trophy — a "human shield" at the front of an armed posse.

WAHEED, PAGE II



GORDON WELTERS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

'My God, my kid needs to go here' In Hamburg, Germany, a professional soccer stadium is also home to what might be the world's coolest kindergarten. PAGE 13

New urgency on North Korea

NEWS ANALYSIS

WASHINGTON

U.S. is worried Pyongyang can now make a nuclear bomb every 6 or 7 weeks

BY DAVID E. SANGER
AND WILLIAM J. BROAD

Behind the Trump administration's sudden urgency in dealing with the North Korean nuclear crisis lies a stark calculus: a growing body of expert studies and classified intelligence reports that conclude the country is capable of producing a nuclear bomb every six or seven weeks.

That acceleration in pace — impossible to verify until experts get beyond the limited access to North Korean facilities that ended years ago — explains why President Trump and his aides fear they are running out of time. For years, American presidents decided that each

TRUMP REJECTS GRADING OF HIS 100 DAYS President has called it a "ridiculous standard," but he's deeply anxious that he be judged a success. PAGE 5

incremental improvement in the North's program — another nuclear test, a new variant of a missile — was worrisome, but not worth a confrontation that could spill into open conflict.

Now those step-by-step advances have resulted in North Korean war-heads that in a few years could reach Seattle. "They've learned a lot," said Siegfried S. Hecker, a Stanford professor who directed the Los Alamos weapons laboratory in New Mexico, the birthplace of the atomic bomb, from 1986 to 1997, and whom the North Koreans have let into their facilities seven times.

North Korea is now threatening another nuclear test, which would be its sixth in 11 years. The last three tests — the most recent was in September — generated Hiroshima-size explosions. It is unclear how Mr. Trump would react to a test, but he told representatives of the United Nations Security Council at the White House on Monday that they should be prepared to pass far more restrictive sanctions, which American officials say should include cutting off energy supplies.

"People have put blindfolds on for decades, and now it's time to solve the problem," Mr. Trump said.

He made his remarks after a Sunday



YONHAP/EUROPEAN PRESSPHOTO AGENCY

A plane landing at an American base in South Korea. President Trump wants to apply military and economic pressure on North Korea to freeze its weapons testing.

night phone call on North Korea with Xi Jinping, China's president, who urged Mr. Trump to show "restraint" with North Korea, according to a Chinese television report. White House officials said little about the call, and aides are trying to use Mr. Trump's unpredictability to the greatest advantage, hoping it will keep the Chinese off balance and de-

ter the North Koreans.

Inside the C.I.A., they call it "the disco ball."

It is a round, metallic sphere, covered by small circles, that the North Korean leader, Kim Jong-un, is shown caressing in official photographs as if it were his crown jewel. And it may be: The sphere NORTH KOREA, PAGE 5

After vote in France, a sigh of relief in Europe

NEWS ANALYSIS

LONDON

Success of centrist helps to ease mainstream worries over far right

BY STEVEN ERLANGER
AND ALISON SMALE

There was palpable relief in mainstream Europe at the success of the independent centrist Emmanuel Macron in the first round of the French presidential elections, and a wide assumption that he will defeat the far-right Marine Le Pen in a runoff two weeks from now.

After other recent electoral setbacks for far-right populists, and the far right's flagging momentum in Germany's election campaign, some even suggested on Monday that the French election could represent the high-water mark of the populist surge that has voted Britain out of the European Union and Donald J. Trump into power in the United States.

If this is a high-water mark, though, the water remains quite high.

For the moment, the parties and personalities that have energized far-right populism have not fully crystallized electorally. But the issues that have animated the movements — slow economies, a lack of jobs, immigration — are not going anywhere, and the far right has already moved the political terrain in its direction.

The politics of Europe remain, at best, precarious, even if the center — the French-German core of the European Union — appears to be holding, at least for now.

"There is a sigh of relief," said Jan Techau, the director of the Holbrooke Forum at the American Academy in Berlin. "It's good that in addition to all the other issues on the agenda, we don't also have an extremist French problem."

After a year of unpredictable elections in Europe and the United States, it would be unwise to discount Ms. Le Pen entirely, even if her odds are long. Still, the French result was particularly welcomed by Brussels and Berlin, which have been praying for a French partner willing to challenge both the statist structure of France and the complacency of the European Union. And after weeks of market jitters, investors on Monday cheered the results, with global stocks surging and the euro reaching fresh highs.

Mr. Macron believes in economic liberalism, a reformed France and a more flexible European Union, while Ms. Le Pen threatens to take France out of the bloc, which would in effect mean break-EUROPE, PAGE 4

THE EURO SURVIVES AN ATTACK

The results of the first round of the French election have eased investors' fears over the currency's future. PAGE 4

Silicon Valley takes on the flying car

CLEARLAKE, CALIF.

A number of start-ups as well as aerospace firms are pursuing the dream

BY JOHN MARKOFF

On a recent afternoon, an aerospace engineer working for a small Silicon Valley company called Kitty Hawk piloted a flying car above a scenic lake about 100 miles north of San Francisco.

Kitty Hawk's flying car, if you insisted on calling it a "car," looked like something Luke Skywalker would have built out of spare parts. It was an open-seated, 220-pound contraption with room for one person, powered by eight battery-powered propellers that howled as loudly as a speedboat.

The tech industry, as we are often told, is fond of disrupting things, and lately the automakers have been a big target. Cars that use artificial intelligence to



The Kitty Hawk Flyer, one of several prototypes being designed by Kitty Hawk, a start-up in Mountain View, Calif. The company is backed by Larry Page, a Google founder.

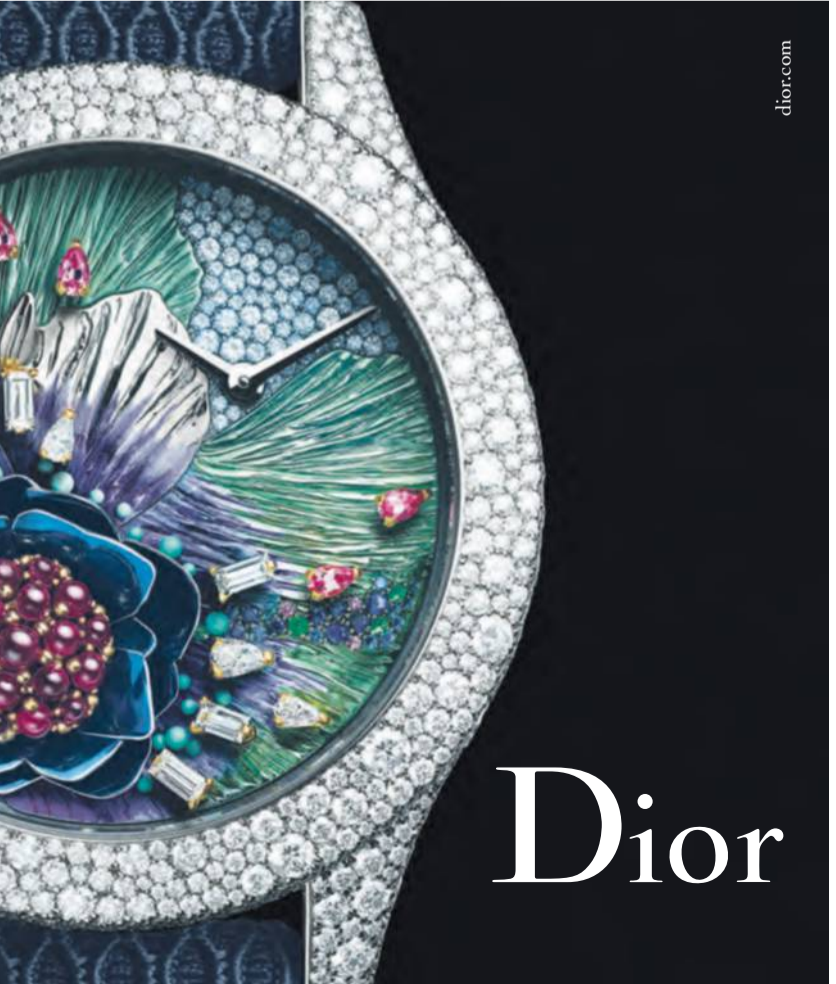
drive themselves, for example, have been in development for a few years and can be spotted on roads in a number of cities. And now, coming onto the radar screen, are flying machines that do not exactly look like your father's Buick with wings.

More than a dozen start-ups backed by deep-pocketed industry figures like Larry Page, a Google founder — along with big aerospace firms like Airbus, the ride-hailing company Uber and even the government of Dubai — are taking on the dream of the flying car.

The approaches by the different companies vary and the realization of their competing visions seems far in the future, but they have one thing in common: a belief that one day regular people should be able to fly their own vehicles around town.

There are challenges, no doubt, with both the technology and government regulations. Perhaps the biggest hurdle will be convincing the public that the whole idea isn't crazy.

"I love the idea of being able to go out FLYING, PAGE 2



Dior



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Removing monuments, under guard

New Orleans begins dismantling statues dedicated to Confederacy

BY CHRISTOPHER MELE

New Orleans has begun removing four monuments dedicated to the era of the Confederacy and its aftermath, capping a prolonged battle about the future of the memorials, which critics deemed symbols of racism and intolerance and which supporters viewed as historically important.

Workers on Monday dismantled an obelisk, which was erected in 1891 to honor members of the Crescent City White League who in 1874 fought in the Reconstruction-era Battle of Liberty Place against the racially integrated New Orleans police and state militia, Mayor Mitch Landrieu said in a statement.

The monument, which was sometimes used as a rallying point by David Duke and the Ku Klux Klan, has stirred debate for decades. Local leaders unsuccessfully tried to remove it in 1981 and 1993.

The workers were dressed in flak jackets, helmets and scarves to conceal their identities because of concerns about their safety. Police officers watched from a nearby hotel.

Pieces of the 15,000-pound monument were put on a truck and hauled away.

Other monuments expected to be removed include a bronze statue of Gen. Robert E. Lee in a traffic circle, named Lee Circle, in the city's central business district since 1884; an equestrian statue of P. G. T. Beauregard, a Confederate general; and a statue of Jefferson Davis, the president of the Confederacy.

Citing security risks and threats to contractors seeking to do the work, the city would not reveal details about the removal of the other statues. The four monuments will be stored in a city-owned facility "until they can be moved to a new location where they can be placed in proper context," said Tyronne B. Walker, a city spokesman.

The monuments were erected decades after the Civil War ended by people who wanted to demonstrate that the South should feel no guilt in having fought the war, the mayor's statement said.

"The removal of these statues sends a clear and unequivocal message to the people of New Orleans and the nation: New Orleans celebrates our diversity, inclusion and tolerance," Mr. Landrieu said. "This is not about politics, blame or retaliation. This is not a naïve quest to solve all our problems at once. This is about showing the whole world that we as a city and as a people are able to acknowledge, understand, reconcile — and most importantly — choose a better future."

The debate over Confederate symbols has taken center stage since nine people were killed at a black church in South Carolina in June 2015. South Carolina removed the Confederate battle flag, which flew at its State House for more than 50 years, and other Southern cities have considered taking down monuments.

Harcourt Fuller, an assistant professor of history at Georgia State University in Atlanta, and a scholar of national and regional symbolism, said in an email that supporters of the monuments see them as part of their "historical and cultural legacy that needs to be maintained and protected.



New Orleans workers in flak jackets dismantled an obelisk dedicated to the Battle of Liberty Place, when whites tried to oust a biracial post-Civil War government. It had become a rallying point for groups like the Ku Klux Klan.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY GERALD HERBERT/ASSOCIATED PRESS

"This is not about politics, blame or retaliation. This is not a naïve quest to solve all our problems at once."

"We're talking largely about these concrete symbols," he added. "By themselves, they're lifeless. They're not living symbols. But we as citizens project our own historical values onto them."

The Liberty Place monument, which was 35 to 40 feet tall, commemorated a violent uprising by white Democrats against the racial integration of the city's police force and the Republicans who governed Louisiana. The White League won the battle and forcibly removed the governor, but federal troops arrived three days later to return the governor to power.

The battle remained an important symbol to those who resisted Reconstruction, the period of transforming Confederate states after the Civil War. From 1932 until 1993, the monument bore a plaque that said, in part, that the "national election of November 1876 recognized white supremacy in the South



Protesters gathered Monday as the obelisk was taken down. Officials in New Orleans also have plans to remove three statues of Confederate generals and leaders.

and gave us our state," the city statement said.

In 1993, the City Council voted to remove the obelisk, but instead the plaque was covered with a new one that read: "In honor of those Americans on both sides who died in the Battle of Liberty Place" and called it "a conflict of the past that should teach us lessons for the future."

It was once prominently perched in a main shopping era, but was relegated to the end of the French Quarter when it was removed for street work in 1989.

After moving the statues into storage, New Orleans will seek a museum or other site to house them. The city said it raised more than \$600,000 in private funding to relocate the statues.

The opposition to the monuments' removal — expressed in op-ed articles, social media posts and shouting at public meetings — was vigorous. A group opposing their removal said it had collected 31,000 signatures for a petition. Demonstrators gathered for a candlelight vigil on Monday as workers removed the Liberty Place monument.

Robert Bonner, 63, who said he was a Civil War re-enactor, protested the monument's removal. "I think it's a terrible

thing," he told The Associated Press. "When you start removing the history of the city, you start losing money. You start losing where you came from and where you've been."

The removal happened on Confederate Memorial Day, which is formally observed by Alabama and Mississippi to commemorate those who died in the Civil War.

In December 2015, the City Council voted 6 to 1 to take the statues down. In January 2016, a federal judge dismissed an attempt by preservation groups and a chapter of the Sons of Confederate Veterans to stop their removal.

An organization dedicated to preserving monuments in New Orleans, the Monumental Task Committee, opposed removing the statues.

In a statement on Monday, Pierre McGraw, the group's president, said the removal process had been "flawed since the beginning" and that the use of unidentified money reeks of "atrocious government."

"People across Louisiana should be concerned over what will disappear next," the statement added.

Daniel Victor contributed reporting.

Silicon Valley takes on the flying car

FLYING, FROM PAGE 1
into my backyard and hop into my flying car," said Brad Templeton, a Silicon Valley entrepreneur who has served as a consultant on Google's self-driving project. "I hate the idea of my next-door neighbor having one."

Kitty Hawk, the company backed by Mr. Page, is trying to be one of the first out of the gate and plans to start selling its vehicle by the end of the year.

The company has attracted intense interest because of Mr. Page and its chief executive, Sebastian Thrun, an influential technologist and self-driving car pioneer who is the founding director of Google's X lab.

In 2013, Zee Aero, a Kitty Hawk division, became the object of Silicon Valley rumors when reports of a small air taxi-like vehicle first surfaced.

Mr. Page declined a request for an interview but said in a statement: "We've all had dreams of flying effortlessly. I'm excited that one day very soon I'll be able to climb onto my Kitty Hawk Flyer for a quick and easy personal flight."

During his recent test flight, Cameron Robertson, the aerospace engineer, used two joysticklike controls to swing the vehicle back and forth above Clear Lake, sliding on the air as a Formula One car might shimmy through a racecourse. The flight, just 15 feet above the water, circled over the lake about 20 or 30 yards from shore, and after about five minutes Mr. Robertson steered back to a floating landing pad at the end of a dock.

The Kitty Hawk Flyer is one of several prototypes the start-up, based in Mountain View, Calif., is designing. The company hopes to create an audience of enthusiasts and hobbyists, who will be able to pay \$100 to sign up for a \$2,000 discount on the retail price of a Flyer to "gain exclusive access to Kitty Hawk experiences and demonstrations where a select few will get the chance to ride the Flyer."

It is an unusual offer, since the company has not yet set a price for the vehicle, and Mr. Thrun's and Mr. Page's involvement can be taken as evidence that the company is aiming far beyond hobbyists. Still, Kitty Hawk is clearly targeting a new kind of transportation — air flight that can be performed safely by most people and hopefully with government approval.

"We have been in contact with the F.A.A. and we see the regulators as friends," Mr. Thrun said in an interview. He agreed that concerns about vehicles flying over our heads were legitimate. "I believe that all of us have to work together to understand how new technologies will shape the future of society," he said.

Two years ago, Mr. Thrun recruited two other pioneers, Mr. Robertson and Todd Reichert, who were aerospace engineers from AeroVelo, a University of Toronto spinoff company that won a coveted prize for a human-powered helicopter and set the land speed record for a bicycle last year.

They are flying under a special Federal Aviation Administration category for ultralight aircraft that does not require a pilot's license and is intended for recreational flying in uncongested areas. To add an extra margin of safety, the Kitty Hawk engineers are sticking to flying over open water. The company said the final commercial product would look different and be far quieter than the test model.

"We hope that this is more of an exciting concept than what most people have

"I love the idea of being able to go out into my backyard and hop into my flying car. I hate the idea of my next-door neighbor having one."

had in their minds about flying cars," Mr. Robertson said. "This is not yet that product in terms of what we will say and what it can do, but I think it demonstrates a vision of the future."

Kitty Hawk could face stiff competition, not just from about a half-dozen start-ups, but from the giant Airbus, which has its headquarters in Blagnac, France. The aerospace firm has announced two different vertical takeoff and landing, or VTOL, concepts and is reported to be planning an initial test flight before the end of the year.

At the Geneva International Motor

Show last month, Airbus proposed an autonomous vehicle named Pop.Up that would operate on both the ground and in the air. And the government of Dubai, in partnership with a Chinese firm, EHang, has said it planned to begin operating an autonomous flying taxi by this July. Also, Uber is expected on Tuesday to detail its "vision for the future of Urban Air Mobility" at a conference in Dallas.

There is no shortage of skeptics happy to point out the roadblocks for these vehicles. There is already significant resistance to the idea of unmanned drones flying over urban areas, and flying cars could face substantial opposition, even if they can be quieted to automotive noise levels.

For these personal air vehicles to become a reality in the United States, the country would need a whole new air traffic control system.

Two years ago, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration began development of an air traffic control system meant for managing all sorts of flying vehicles, including drones. One NASA developer described it as an air traffic control system, "for a sky dark with drones." Researchers hope testing can begin by 2019.

Batteries are also an issue. While electric propeller-driven motors seem promising, today's battery technology cannot support flights of a reasonable distance, say a 30- or 50-mile commute.

"How is this going to work? I don't



CLAUDE PARIS/ASSOCIATED PRESS

AeroMobil's prototype flying car, in Monaco. More than a dozen start-ups backed by deep-pocketed industry figures are taking on the dream of personal flying vehicles.

want to be a Debbie Downer, but we can't even take our cellphones on airplanes today because of fears about battery fires," said Missy Cummings, the director of the Humans and Autonomy Laboratory at Duke University, who is researching personal air transport for NASA.

And don't forget that flying cars will

not be able to pull to the side of the road in an emergency, said John Leonard, a mechanical engineer at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory. "Silicon Valley is full of very smart people, but they don't always get the laws of physics," he said. "Gravity is a formidable adversary."

World



For the monthly day of service known as Umuganda, every able-bodied Rwandan between the ages of 18 and 65 must work on a designated project for three hours.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MEGAN SPECIA/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Side by side after genocide

MBYO, RWANDA

‘Reconciliation villages’ in Rwanda place victims and attackers together

BY MEGAN SPECIA

They awoke early and gathered along a plot of land here in this Rwandan village made up of a few homes. Together, they began hacking away at a grass-bare patch with long-handled garden hoes. The mission: Dig a drainage ditch alongside a row of homes that had been continually flooding during rains.

Scenes like this one were playing out across Rwanda on this Saturday — a monthly day of service known as Umuganda.

The premise is simple and extraordinary in its efficient enforcement: Every able-bodied Rwandan citizen between the ages of 18 and 65 must take part in community service for three hours once a month. The community identifies a new public works problem to tackle each month.

“We never had Umuganda before the genocide,” said Jean Baptiste Kwizera, 21, wiping sweat from his brow as he took a break from the project here in Mbyo, about an hour’s drive from Kigali, the capital. Though the genocide ended a year before Mr. Kwizera was born, it is deeply ingrained in the lives of even the youngest Rwandans.

This compulsory work is emblematic of a broader culture of reconciliation, development and social control asserted by the government. Each local umudugudu — or village — keeps track of who attends the projects. Those who fail to participate without being excused risk fines and in some cases arrest.

Setting an example and seizing an opportunity to publicize the service on this Saturday, the country’s president, Paul Kagame, helped break ground for a new elementary school in the country’s northeast while dozens of photographers snapped photos. “Umuganda is about the culture of working together and helping each other to build this country,” Mr. Kagame told reporters.

Rwanda has been a unique experiment in national reconciliation and assiduously enforced social re-engineering in the more than two decades since its devastating genocide, when thousands in the country’s Hutu ethnic ma-



“We forgave him from our hearts,” Jacqueline Mukamana said of her neighbor, who was among a group that killed her father and four other members of her family.

jority unleashed unspeakable violence on the Tutsi minority and moderate Hutu countrymen who refused to take part in the slaughter. In just 100 days, nearly one million people perished.

Umuganda was revived and dozens of other nation-rebuilding exercises were conceived under Mr. Kagame, who came to power after the genocide and has held the presidency since 2000. A recent constitutional amendment paved the way for him to seek a third term in office, and in August he plans to do just that.

While many of his administration’s programs have lowered poverty and child mortality rates, Mr. Kagame remains a controversial figure.

Many political analysts and human rights groups say Mr. Kagame has created a nation that is orderly but repressive. Laws banning so-called genocidal ideology that were adopted to deter a resurgence of sectarian or hate speech are also used to squelch even legitimate criticism of the government.

Against this backdrop, it is difficult to gauge sentiment about the effectiveness of reconciliation efforts, including Umuganda. The government’s National Unity and Reconciliation Commission has twice released a “reconciliation barometer,” which looks at dozens of factors to determine how well people are

living together. In 2015, the last year for which the figures are available, the country deemed reconciliation in Rwanda was at 92.5 percent.

On this morning in Mbyo, none of the villagers openly questioned Umuganda or the wider reconciliation process.

“We needed security, and we found it because of our government,” Mr. Kwizera said, praising a government he sees as essential for charting a path forward.

“I was in the part which was being hunted,” he explained, describing his family’s ethnic identity without ever saying the word Tutsi. Like others in this generation, who have been taught from their earliest school days to suppress any sense of ethnic identity, he considers himself simply Rwandan.

But in Mbyo, acknowledgment of past divisions is inescapable.

Mbyo is one of seven “reconciliation villages” established by Prison Fellowship Rwanda, a Christian organization that facilitates the small cluster of homes for those convicted of carrying out the violence and those who suffered at their hands.

Pastor Deo Gashagaza, who helped found the organization, created a process to connect Rwandans who had been imprisoned for participating in the slaughter with the families they

harmed, and encourage dialogue through community-centered activities.

“Rebuilding the nation requires everyone to help,” Mr. Gashagaza said. “We still have a lot of things to do for our communities, for social cohesion. It’s painful, but it’s a journey of healing.”

In these villages, reconciliation is not just a moment. It is a way of life.

On a patch of property shaded by yellow flowering trees, Jacqueline Mukamana and Mathias Sendegeya sat side by side shelling peanuts and tossing them into a metal pan.

At first glance, the pair could be mistaken for husband and wife, leaning against each other with ease as they shucked the nuts. They were neighbors before the genocide and have known each other most of their lives, after growing up in a nearby village.

In 1994, Ms. Mukamana was 17. Her father, six brothers, five sisters and nine uncles were killed that April. She fled to Burundi. When she returned, her family home was destroyed.

Mr. Sendegeya was among the group that killed her father and four other members of her family, a fact that both speak about frankly but without much detail.

While Mr. Sendegeya takes responsibility for the murders, he believes that the political leaders of the past orchestrated the killings and that without that influence, his life would have been very different. “That was the fault of the then-government that pushed us to kill Tutsis,” he said, his eyes gazing steadily ahead as he echoed a sentiment heard throughout the community from both perpetrators and survivors. “We massacred them, killed and ate their cows. I offended them gravely.”

When he was in jail, he was waiting for death, and reconciliation never crossed his mind, he said.

Mr. Sendegeya re-entered society through a program that allows perpetrators to be released if they seek forgiveness from their victims. While in prison, he had reached out to Ms. Mukamana through Prison Fellowship Rwanda.

“He confessed and asked for forgiveness. He told me the truth,” Ms. Mukamana explained. “We forgave him from our hearts. There is no problem between us.”

Megan Specia was a 2017 fellow with the International Women’s Media Foundation’s African Great Lakes Reporting Initiative.

Soros-backed school harassed in Hungary

BUDAPEST

Move by government to shut Central European University stirs protests

BY PALKO KARASZ

As an American scholar of Soviet history, Charles D. Shaw thought he understood authoritarianism before he moved to Hungary in 2015 to teach at Central European University.

“Coming from Moscow to Budapest, it certainly felt like I was finally coming to Europe — to the European Union,” Mr. Shaw said.

Now he feels as if repression has followed him.

The right-wing government of Prime Minister Viktor Orban recently passed legislation that could shut down the university, which was created after the fall of Communism and which promotes the ideal of an open society.

Next month, Parliament will vote on a bill to impose greater scrutiny on nonprofit organizations that receive foreign financing.

Mr. Orban, prime minister since 2010, supports the idea of “illiberal democracy,” which puts rule-by-majority nationalism ahead of minority rights, political pluralism and international cooperation.

For Mr. Shaw, the parallels with contemporary Russia are unnerving. “The political and cultural boundaries of Europe are potentially shifting,” he said. “And that’s what’s so scary to people.”

The legislation, which Western diplomats have condemned, is widely seen as part of a vendetta against Central European University’s founder, the Hungarian-American financier and philanthropist George Soros.

Mr. Orban has accused Mr. Soros of “preparing liberal activists” for political life in the Balkans and Central Europe, adding, “The Soros empire set out to promote the cause of migrants and mass migration.”

But on the campus here, scattered across historic buildings in Budapest’s elegant center, Mr. Soros’s name does not come up often.

Scholars and students said they were bewildered by the government’s attempt to cast their institution as part of the opposition — a role the university, as a place of inquiry, does not seek to inhabit.

“There’s a certain style of politics in Europe that believes: If you’re not with us, you’re against us,” said Michael Ignatieff, the university’s president and rector, who is also a human rights scholar and a former leader of the Liberal Party in Canada.

“The C.E.U. issue came to symbolize the amount of harm that some of the government’s actions are having right across the spectrum,” he added. “All we’re trying to do is get them to back off and leave us alone — and give us a guarantee that we can stay here.”

The law targeting Central European

University has injected fear and shock into the campus.

“This is an attack on academic freedom,” said Alexandra Medzibrodsky, 29, a Hungarian doctoral student in history, who was wearing a pin showing her support for the university. “This is why it resonates with intellectuals from all sides.”

Conservative scholars are among those who have spoken out.

“The entire academic sector of this nation, in essence, feels imperiled, following the passing of this law,” Miklos Kiraly, a law professor at Eotvos Lorand University in Budapest, wrote in an open letter after Mr. Orban asked why Hungarian scholars had been standing up for Central European University. “The general opinion is that there are no more boundaries, no more limits, no checks and sound professional considerations, consultations, traditions or acquired rights.”

Over the past quarter-century, the university has blended into the fabric of Budapest. Even English, the lingua franca around campus, stands out less in a city that has enjoyed a tourism boom and a building boom.

Support for the university seems genuine — signs declaring “#IstandwithCEU” in English and Hungarian can be seen not only in university buildings but also in the windows of cafes and other businesses.

Central European University is accredited in both Hungary and the United

“This is an attack on academic freedom.”

States. The new law appears to require that the university open an American campus, which it says would be financially prohibitive. (After European and American diplomats condemned the measure, the Orban government said it was open to talks with the university about ways to resolve the legal impasse.)

Students said they were attracted by Central European University precisely because they wanted an American-style education, with small classes, discussions based on reading, proximity to professors and fewer large lectures. Some 370 academics from around the world teach about 1,400 students here, many of them from Central Europe. Master’s and doctoral degrees are offered in the social sciences, the humanities, law, management and public policy.

Cody Inglis, 23, a history student who came to Budapest after studying at Arizona State University, said he was yearning for life to return to normal after weeks spent protesting and writing letters. April is usually a time for researching theses and submitting papers; some faculty members have extended deadlines.

“What bugs me the most is that I should be working on my thesis right now, not sitting here talking to you,” Ms. Medzibrodsky said at a cafe near campus.



LASZLO BALOGH/REUTERS

A protest in Budapest against a law that could force the closing of Central European University, founded by the Hungarian-American philanthropist George Soros.

Portraitist rendered black pride with the flair of old masters

BARKLEY L. HENDRICKS
1945-2017

BY WILLIAM GRIMES

Barkley L. Hendricks, a painter who gave new representation to ordinary black men and women, memorializing them in portraits that echoed the grand manner of the old masters, died on April 18 in New London, Conn. He was 72.

His wife, Susan, said that the cause was a cerebral hemorrhage.

While touring Europe as an undergraduate art student in the mid-1960s, Mr. Hendricks fell in love with the portrait style of artists like van Dyck and Velázquez. His immersion in the Western canon, however, left him troubled. In his visits to the museums and churches of Britain, Italy, Spain and the Netherlands, he saw virtually no black subjects. His own race was, in effect, a void in Western art.

As the Black Power movement un-

folded around him, he set about correcting the balance, in life-size portraits of friends, relatives and strangers encountered on the street that communicated a new assertiveness and pride among black Americans.

“Lawdy Mama,” one of his first portraits, showed a young woman with an enormous Afro looking impassively at the viewer. Although her dress was modern, the arched top of the canvas and background in gold leaf suggested a Byzantine icon.

Throughout the 1970s Mr. Hendricks produced a series of portraits of young black men, usually placed against monochromatic backdrops, that captured their self-assurance and confident sense of style. The subject of “Steve” (1976) stood nonchalantly, his hands in the pockets of his belted white trench coat, looking into the distance through a pair of sunglasses, the blackness of his skin and his shoes a stark contrast to the dazzling white background.

“As an added note of audacity, he



C.M. GLOVER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Barkley L. Hendricks in his kitchen at home in New London, Conn., in 2007, with “Frog,” a work from 1976.

paints into the reflections of the mirrored sunglasses the figure is wearing two little cityscapes and what may be a miniature self-portrait of the artist himself at work,” the critic Hilton Kramer wrote of the painting in The New York Times. “It is all quite stunning.”

Mr. Hendricks often used himself as a subject. In “Icon for My Man Superman” (1969), he appeared, arms crossed, wearing a Superman jersey and sunglasses, naked from the waist down. The painting’s subtitle, “Superman Never Saved Any Black People,” echoed a remark by Bobby Seale, a founder of the Black Panther Party.

In his sardonic 1977 painting “Brilliantly Endowed (Self Portrait)” — its title borrowed from Mr. Kramer’s review — he stood naked except for a pair of drooping striped tube socks and a floppy white cap perched on his head. A toothpick at the corner of his mouth, balanced at a jaunty angle, accentuated the relaxed so-what? attitude of the pose.

Mr. Hendricks resisted classification

as a political painter, or as a black painter for that matter. The subject of “Lawdy Mama,” he liked to point out, was not a militant, despite the Angela Davis Afro, but a second cousin.

“My paintings were about people that were part of my life,” he told the art newspaper The Brooklyn Rail in 2016. “If they were political, it’s because they were a reflection of the culture we were drowning in.”

Barkley Leonnard Hendricks was born on April 16, 1945, in Philadelphia. After graduating from Simon Gratz High School in 1963, he enrolled in the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, where he studied with the black landscape painter Louis Sloan, earning a certificate in 1967.

In 1970 he enrolled in Yale’s school of art, where he was able to complete both his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in fine art in two years. Immediately after graduating, he joined the art department at Connecticut College in New London, where he taught until 2010.

WORLD

Rise of a centrist calms E.U. nerves

EUROPE, FROM PAGE 1
ing it over her knee.

Jean-Claude Juncker, the president of the European Commission, broke protocol to congratulate Mr. Macron and wish him continued success, as did the German foreign minister, Sigmar Gabriel, who said, “He will be a great president.”

By winning more votes than Ms. Le Pen, Mr. Macron, who at 39 is on course to be France’s youngest head of state since Napoleon, seemed to many to be a new generation’s centrist answer to sclerotic and corrupt establishment politics and the challenge of populism and the far right.

Even so, candidates of the far right and far left did very well in the voting, reflecting strong and skeptical views among the French public.

“Of course many people in Brussels and so on are relieved that we don’t have two extremists in the last round, but only one,” said Guntram B. Wolff, a German who directs Bruegel, a Brussels-based research organization.

“But the fact of the matter is that we still have a little bit more than 40 percent of the electorate having voted for an extremist,” Mr. Wolff said. “So that shows that a large part of the French population doesn’t seem to be very

“That the flow of support towards the far-right populists has stagnated is a hopeful sign for European democracy.”

happy with his or her own position and pretty dissatisfied with the political system.”

The question for many is whether a centrist reformer like Mr. Macron, a former investment banker, is prepared to seriously take on board the dissatisfaction of ordinary working people.

“That the flow of support towards the far-right populists has stagnated is a hopeful sign for European democracy,” Ska Keller and Philippe Lamberts, the co-leaders of the Greens in the European Parliament, said cautiously in a joint statement.

“But the threat from the far right is not over,” they were quick to add. “If Macron is to take it on and defeat it, he needs to get real on social justice and do more for those who feel marginalized.”

Still, for a majority in Europe, the far right has not provided answers either, as it has fallen short of predicted triumphs.

In December, the far right was defeated narrowly in Austria’s presidential election. In a parliamentary vote in the Netherlands in March, the nationalist Geert Wilders failed to come first as feared, though he did finish second. In Britain, the U.K. Independence Party, or UKIP, which pushed for the country to exit the European Union, has lost its only member in the national Parliament and is floundering before the June 8 elections.

Perhaps most significant, with crucial German elections this September, the populist Alternative for Germany, which rode a wave of anti-Islam, anti-migrant sentiment to seats in 11 of the country’s

16 state legislatures, seems to be running out of steam, mired in internal disputes.

Yet on traditional measures, Ms. Le Pen did very well in the first-round vote on Sunday. She received nearly 7.7 million votes, compared with her 6.4 million in the first round in 2012 and the 4.8 million that her father, Jean-Marie, received when he advanced to the second round in 2002.

While Ms. Le Pen is expected to lose in the runoff, Mr. Macron — as a youthful banker with an elite education — is an easy target for her. French unhappiness with establishment parties is sure to be reflected in the June votes for the French legislature, in which Mr. Macron and his year-old movement, En Marche!, will have to work hard to cobble together a working majority.

Robin Niblett, the director of Chat-ham House, a research institute in London, cautioned that populist views have been growing for many years, not just in southern Europe but in “more settled northern Europe,” like Sweden, Finland and the Netherlands.

“In a time of economic turbulence, there’s been a search for national identity and individual identity, a feeling that national identities are being stripped away at a pace people can’t control,” he said. “The E.U. is seen as an expression of that loss, and even a vehicle for it.”

As important, the far right’s nationalism and opposition to multilateralism have split mainstream parties and pushed the national conversation to the right.

Giles Merritt and Shada Islam of Friends of Europe, a research institution, hailed Mr. Macron, saying that if elected, he “would not only breathe new life into the Franco-German ‘locomotive’ but offer a more hopeful and upbeat message for the future.”

Germany especially is looking forward to a more like-minded French partner, as together they make up about 47 percent of the eurozone’s gross domestic product, said Daniela Schwarzer, the director of the German Council on Foreign Relations in Berlin.

“Macron understands Europe and the need to change things, and that means changing France, too,” she said, noting a speech by Mr. Macron in Berlin that directly linked “reform and modernization in France with reform in the E.U.”

That is the perfect line for Germany, she said, “which fears pressure for more burden-sharing with countries who haven’t done their economic homework.”

Mr. Macron has said he wants a common eurozone budget under a eurozone “finance minister” and has proposed “democratic conventions” to identify reform priorities for the European Union.

The Germans fear that if the eurozone integrates further with a budget and banking union, but without prior economic changes from its members, Germany will end up bailing out everyone else forever. So Mr. Macron, vowing economic reform in France, is singing a song much more attuned to German ears.

But Mr. Macron, if elected, is also expected to push a harder negotiating line with Britain over its exit from the European Union — especially on the issue of



SYLVAIN LEFÈVRE/GETTY IMAGES

The success of the independent centrist Emmanuel Macron, above, in the French presidential elections could mark the limits of far-right populism in Europe, which has been driven by opposition to refugees, like those arriving in Slovenia, below left, and that led to the vote by people in Britain, below right, to exit from the European Union.



SERGEY PONOMAREV FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



ANDREW TESTA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

financial services, about which he knows a great deal.

“With his background, we assume Macron sees much more clearly where the actual issues lie and will work to prevent Europe from facing a competitive disadvantage,” Ms. Schwarzer said.

But there is much to play for, not just in Britain’s election in June but especially in Germany’s in September. Chan-

cellor Angela Merkel faces a strong challenge from the center-left Social Democrats, and the far-right Alternative for Germany is likely to win seats in the federal Parliament for the first time.

At the far right’s party conference this past weekend in Cologne, there were strong themes of nationalism and distaste for immigration despite the party’s internal disputes, in which Frauke

Petry, one of its leaders, lost her effort to pull the party away from the hard right.

Her rivals brought delegates to their feet with speeches that pandered to identity loss. Whether or not the party succeeds, the issue seems likely to continue to resonate broadly.

Jörg Meuthen, a professor who leads the party with Ms. Petry, said that few Germans could be seen as one walked

around a typical German town.

“This is our country,” he told cheering delegates. “The country of our grandparents and parents. We must take it back.”

Steven Erlanger reported from London, and Alison Smale from Cologne, Germany, and Berlin. James Kanter contributed reporting from Brussels.

Markets exhale as euro survives attack from the right

LONDON

Results of first round in French election provide some respite

BY PETER S. GOODMAN

The euro has avoided another existential crisis that might have wreaked havoc on Europe and the global economy. That was the conclusion investors divined from the first round of voting in the French presidential election, prompting exuberant buying on markets around the world.

Those in control of money looked beyond the fact that Marine Le Pen, a far-right candidate bearing intense hostility to the euro, claimed a spot in the second round of balloting on May 7. Instead, they focused on polls showing that she was likely to be defeated, and by a lopsided margin, at the hands of her sole remaining opponent — Emmanuel Macron, a pro-European figure trusted by business leaders.

For markets anxious about the prospect of a Le Pen presidency, it was as if a fire-breathing dragon hovering over the kingdom had been slain.

The manic swings of the markets — first spooked by the possibility of a Le Pen presidency, then ecstatic over the apparent unlikelihood of that possibility — attest to the gnawing fear that the euro could still succumb to whatever blow history delivers next. The euro confronts a chronic shortage of faith in its ability to persevere, along with a surplus of threats to its existence.

In recent years, the euro has survived enough Greek tragedy to fill an Aeschylus trilogy and has had sufficient brushes with Italian banks for an opera. It has endured a global financial shock, years of regional economic stagnation and no end of cross-border political acousations.

As Ms. Le Pen appeared to see her

electoral fortunes expand in recent months, the markets construed yet another direct threat to the euro’s sustainability.

Ms. Le Pen, the leader of the National Front party, has long disdained the euro as a threat to prosperity. She has pledged to convert French debt into a new national currency, an undertaking that could begin the euro’s downfall. And she has vowed to renegotiate France’s relationship with the European Union, threatening to upend the project of European integration that has prevailed on the Continent as an antidote to the brutalities of World War II.

Her strength in polls in recent weeks prompted investors to demand greater returns on French government debt, a sign that the odds of default — however minute — were multiplying. Investors had been aggressively purchasing options that offered protection against a precipitous plunge in the value of the euro.

Few gave credence to the prospect that Ms. Le Pen could actually deliver on her radical promises. Even if she were to shock pollsters and win, her party would almost certainly fall well short of claiming a majority in the French Parliament after legislative elections in June. She would be relegated to figurehead status, with governing handled by a prime minister selected by the party in command.

Still, concern in the markets underscored the fundamental defects that have long compromised the euro. It is a structurally flawed currency, one adopted by 19 nations — known collectively as the eurozone — that operate without a unified political organization.

Many argue that the euro was doomed from inception. It was conceived more as an idealistic reach for European cooperation than as a reasoned plan to manage a currency. The assumption was that shared money would spur greater European political integration.

Instead, the euro has devolved into a major source of political acrimony across the Continent.



ALAIN JOCARD/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

Marine Le Pen, one of two remaining candidates for the French presidency, in northern France. She has long disdained the euro as a malevolent threat to prosperity.

In countries with their own money, bad economic times typically prompt governments to spend more to generate jobs and spur growth. Their currencies fall in value, making their goods cheaper on world markets and aiding exports.

But countries in the eurozone cannot fully avail themselves of those benefits. The currency comes with rules limiting the size of budget deficits. Faced with hard times, governments using the euro have been forced to intensify the hurt on ordinary people by cutting pensions and other public outlays.

The Nobel laureate economist Joseph E. Stiglitz has indicted the euro as a leading source of economic inequality that has divided European nations into two stark classes — creditor and debtor.

As Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain have slid into debt crises in recent years, they have accused Ger-

many of self-serving inflexibility in demanding strict adherence to debt limits while refusing to transfer wealth to those in trouble. Germany and other northern countries have accused their southern brethren of failing to carry out changes — like making it easier to fire workers — that would make them more competitive.

The crises have time and again exposed the structural flaws of the eurozone, and its tendency to generate more recrimination than action.

“You have a basic situation in the eurozone now where it’s like a half-built house,” said Jacob F. Kirkegaard, a senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics in Washington. “As long as that persists, a large number of investors are going to have existential doubts about the euro.”

The latest alarm was being set off by France, one of the euro’s charter mem-

bers, and a pillar of the European Union. This was playing out against a backdrop of destabilizing events that once seemed impossible — the election of Donald J. Trump in the United States and the vote in Britain to abandon the European Union, also known as Brexit.

Ms. Le Pen has moderated her positions recently as her election has gained plausibility, but her hostility for the European Union and the euro are well known. “I want to destroy the E.U.,” she told the German newsmagazine Spiegel in a 2014 interview. “The E.U. is deeply harmful, it is an antidemocratic monster. I want to prevent it from becoming fatter, from continuing to breathe, from grabbing everything with its paws.”

In the same interview, she confirmed her desire to yank France free of the euro. “If we don’t all leave the euro behind, it will explode,” she said.

Ms. Le Pen has since muted talk of renouncing the euro in favor of adding a parallel currency, the franc. But the threatened act of redenominating French debt would almost certainly lead to a downgrade of France’s credit rating, bringing severe market consequences, said Mujtaba Rahman, managing director for Europe at the Eurasia Group, a risk consultancy based in London.

Mr. Rahman traced a potentially calamitous string of events that could play out after a victory by Ms. Le Pen. Even before parliamentary elections, she could appoint a temporary government while serving notice that France intended to renegotiate the terms of its membership with the European Union.

“Her room for maneuver is greater than people believe,” Mr. Rahman said. “She will have interpreted her election as a massive mandate. It flows from Brexit, it flows from Trump, and she’ll try to get as much of her agenda done while she is unrestrained.”

Even if she is stymied by political backlash, she could cause a volatile reaction in financial markets. Around the globe, central banks, sovereign wealth funds and asset managers hold some

700 billion euros, or about \$760 billion, in French government debt. A Le Pen presidency could scare them into unloading some of it, increasing borrowing costs for the French government and the business world.

French banks could see consumers pull euros out of their accounts to be saved elsewhere. If that became a bank run, the consequences could become global, given that France’s four largest banks are deeply intertwined in the international financial system.

Most analysts dismiss such talk as apocalyptic. The French Parliament and Constitution would severely constrain a President Le Pen. Investors would grasp that. Still, in the run-up to the first round, the costs of protecting assets against government default grew in Italy, as well as in France.

The fear was that if Ms. Le Pen were to win the presidency, the risks would proliferate. That would increase the costs of borrowing for businesses and households in Italy, Spain and Portugal, impeding job creation and economic activity. That could generate public anger, stoking the fires of populism as Italy goes to the polls early next year. Enhanced electoral prospects in Italy for the Five Star Movement, which favors scuttling the euro, could result.

In short, a victory by Ms. Le Pen would add momentum to Europe’s crisis of confidence. It would inject greater dysfunction into European institutions, rendering them even less capable of alleviating economic troubles. And more strife has in recent times translated into more support for the populist movements seeking to dismantle those institutions. “It would be devastating for the eurozone and the E.U. if she won,” Mr. Kirkegaard said. “It would certainly paralyze the eurozone in terms of almost anything for at least five years.”

But on Monday, as stock markets exulted and the euro climbed, that possibility had seemingly been rendered hypothetical. The euro — perpetually afflicted by doubt — had dodged the latest immediate threat to its permanence.

Trump says grading his 100 days is ‘ridiculous’

WHITE HOUSE MEMO
WASHINGTON

But president is anxious to be judged a success at this early stage of term

BY PETER BAKER

In case anyone was wondering, President Trump wants it known that he does not care about the false judgment of his administration after just 100 days. “It’s an artificial barrier,” he sniffed the other day. “Not very meaningful,” he scoffed. A “ridiculous standard,” he added on Twitter.

So how is Mr. Trump spending his final week before the artificial and ridiculous 100-day point of his presidency on Saturday? With a flurry of action on health care, taxes and the border wall to show just how much he has done in the first 100 days — amplified by a White House program of first-100-days briefings, first-100-days receptions, a first-100-days website and a first-100-days rally.

It may not be meaningful, but Mr. Trump has invested quite a lot of meaning in the 100-day grading period, deeply anxious that he be judged a success at this early stage. And not just a success, but one with plenty of superlatives: the most successful president with the most executive orders and bills signed and the best relationships with foreign leaders and the most action taken by any president ever in the first 100 days. Even though it’s an artificial barrier.

“As with so much else, Trump is a study in inconsistency,” said Robert Dallek, the presidential historian. “One minute he says his 100 days have been the best of any president, and the next minute he decries the idea of measuring a president by the 100 days.”

And lest anyone say otherwise, Mr. Trump has already told supporters not to believe contrary assessments, anticipating more critical evaluations by journalists, not to mention partisan attacks by Democrats. “No administration has accomplished more in the first 90 days,” Mr. Trump boasted in Wisconsin last week, not waiting for the final 10 days to grade himself.

Hoping to pad the report card, he announced suddenly late last week that he would unveil a sweeping tax plan on Wednesday and pressed House Republicans to hold a vote by the end of this week on a revised plan to replace former President Barack Obama’s health care program, even as lawmakers were trying to avert a government shutdown.

If nothing else, Mr. Trump’s first 100 days have certainly been eventful. Whether they have accomplished much is more a subject of debate. He nominated a Supreme Court justice and got him confirmed, abandoned the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement, launched a missile strike against Syria and reversed many of Mr. Obama’s regulations, most notably on the environment.

He has signed a spate of executive orders — 25 are listed on the White House website — numerically surpassing most modern presidents, depending on how they are counted. But some of them are more aspirational: One, for instance, ordered a study on steel dumping without taking action on steel dumping. Like-wise, he has signed 28 bills into law, according to the White House, the most of any president in nearly seven decades.



STEPHEN CROWLEY/THE NEW YORK TIMES

President Trump has already told supporters not to believe negative assessments of his first 100 days in office. “No administration has accomplished more in the first 90 days,” he said last week.

Some of them were aimed at unraveling regulations enacted late in Mr. Obama’s presidency in areas like teacher preparation, land management and federal procurement. Others were less weighty, like one officially naming a veterans’ health center in Butler County, Pa., the “Abie Abraham V.A. Clinic.”

Many of the more high-profile promises he made on the campaign trail are stalled or incomplete, like building a border wall, renegotiating or scrapping the North American Free Trade Agreement, temporarily barring visitors from predominantly Muslim countries and revamping health care. Moreover, he has done nothing to build public support, and his approval ratings are still hovering around 40 percent, far lower than any other modern president at this point in his tenure.

To the extent that he is being held to a measurement he disdains, he has no one to blame but himself. In October, he issued a “Contract With the American Voter,” which he called “my 100-day ac-

tion plan to Make America Great Again.” He has begun many of the executive actions he promised in that plan.

But of the 10 major pieces of legislation whose passage he vowed to fight for “within the first 100 days,” only one has even been introduced.

“None have been passed — not a single one — and nine haven’t even been sent to the Congress,” said Ronald A. Klain, who was a top White House aide under Mr. Obama and President Bill Clinton. “If Trump finds himself hoisted on the 100-day test, it is a petard that he erected for himself.”

Asked about the 100-day plan by The Associated Press last Friday, Mr. Trump brushed it off, saying, “Somebody put out the concept of a 100-day plan.” He seemed to have forgotten that he personally recorded a video during the transition repeating the 100-day promises.

“We feel very proud of what we’ve been able to accomplish and fulfill the promises that he made to the American people,” Sean Spicer, the White House

press secretary, said. “But I think it’s got to be kept in context.” The context, he added, “is it’s 100 days, and you’ve got four years in your first term and eight years for two terms.”

Asked why the White House was making such a production if it was an artificial measure, Mr. Spicer said it was an inevitable concession to the reality that every news organization is busily preparing an assessment.

The fixation with the first 100 days traces its history back to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who took office in the Great Depression and passed 15 major pieces of legislation in short order. Ever since, presidents have bristled at what they considered an impossible standard.

“It is hard to judge any of these other presidents after that, and I think all of them are cursing the idea that this got started,” said Doris Kearns Goodwin, author of “No Ordinary Time,” a book about Roosevelt. “That’s the one thing they might all agree on, the post-F.D.R. presidents: ‘No way; this isn’t fair.’ ”

“One minute he says his 100 days have been the best of any president, and the next minute he decries the idea of measuring a president by the 100 days.”

John F. Kennedy tried to reset expectations on his Inauguration Day when he proclaimed, “All this will not be finished in the first 100 days, nor will it be finished in the first 1,000 days.” Mr. Obama echoed this argument on the night he was elected, saying, “We may not get there in one year or even one term.”

Aides to President George W. Bush argued that he should be given extra time because his transition was cut short by the Florida recount.

But, failing to convince anyone of that, he ended up inviting members of Congress to the White House to “celebrate our 100 days of working together.”

Mr. Obama resisted what his senior

adviser, David Axelrod, called “a Hall-mark holiday,” but he had passed the largest economic stimulus package in history by that point and ended up holding a town-hall-style meeting and a prime-time news conference.

To be sure, the first 100 days of the Bush and Clinton presidencies bore only a modest resemblance to the rest of their tenures.

Less important than a scorecard of accomplishments, Ms. Goodwin said, is the leadership style demonstrated in the early days.

Jonathan Alter, author of “The Defining Moment: F.D.R.’s Hundred Days and the Triumph of Hope,” said Mr. Trump did not come close to any modern president in meaningful accomplishments so far.

But he agreed that the first 100 days tell only part of the story.

“I don’t think the first 100 days are by themselves that important,” he said. “The first year is critically important, and the first 100 days set the tone for the first year.”

U.S. feels a new urgency on North Korea

NORTH KOREA, FROM PAGE 1

is supposedly a nuclear weapon, shrunken to fit inside the nose cone of one of the country’s growing arsenal of missiles.

American intelligence officials still debate whether it is a real bomb or a mock-up that is part of the country’s vast propaganda effort. But it is intended to show where the country is headed.

Unless something changes, North Korea’s arsenal may well hit 50 weapons by the end of Mr. Trump’s term, about half the size of Pakistan’s. American officials say the North already knows how to shrink those weapons so they can fit atop one of its short- to medium-range missiles — putting South Korea and Japan, and the thousands of American troops deployed in those two nations, within range. The best estimates are that North Korea has roughly 1,000 ballistic missiles in eight or so varieties.

But fulfilling Mr. Kim’s dream — putting a nuclear weapon atop an intercontinental ballistic missile that can reach Seattle or Los Angeles, or one day New York — remains a more complex problem.

Dr. Hecker, a man who has built his share of nuclear weapons, noted last week that any weapon that could travel that far would have to be “smaller, lighter and surmount the additional difficulties of the stresses and temperatures” of a fiery re-entry into the atmosphere.

By most estimates, that is four or five years away. Then again, many senior officials said the same four or five years ago.

But the North has come further than most experts expected since the infancy of its program in the 1950s, when the Soviet Union began training North Korean

“People have put blindfolds on for decades, and now it’s time to solve the problem.”

scientists in nuclear basics.

It took three decades for the North to assemble the technology it needed to make its own bomb fuel. Finally, from a reactor at Yongbyon, it succeeded in making plutonium: enough for about one atomic bomb a year.

The first North Korean nuclear crisis, in 1994, ended in an agreement with the Clinton administration to freeze the North’s production facilities in return for oil and peaceful reactors. It fell apart early in the George W. Bush administration. In 2006, the first test explosion, while unimpressive, entered North Korea into the club of nuclear powers. Analysts say the first blast was a plutonium bomb, as was a second detonation just months into the Obama administration in 2009.

Dr. Hecker visited Yongbyon in 2010, and the North Koreans showed him a complete uranium enrichment facility, which American intelligence agencies had missed. The message was clear: The North now had two pathways to a bomb, uranium and plutonium. Today, it has an arsenal made up of both, intelligence officials say.

And it is aiming for something much bigger: a hydrogen bomb, with a destructive force up to 1,000 times greater than ordinary nuclear weapons. That is exactly the path the United States took in the 1950s.

Recently, United Nations investigators found evidence that the North’s factories had succeeded in producing lithium 6, a rare ingredient needed to



KCNA/EUROPEAN PRESSPHOTO AGENCY

The North Korean leader Kim Jong-un with what the C.I.A. calls “the disco ball,” which may be a nuclear weapon small enough to fit inside the nose cone of a missile.

make thermonuclear fuel. Gregory S. Jones, a scientist at the RAND Corporation, said the North might have already used bits of thermonuclear fuel in its 2016 detonations.

A potential clue, analysts say, is that the North’s five blasts over the past decade have grown steadily more destructive.

SHRINKING THE BOMB

A bomb is useless to North Korea — as an offensive weapon or as a deterrent — unless the country can make a convincing case that it has a reliable delivery system. So when the North flaunts mis-

siles at military parades, as it did on April 15, the stars of the show tend to be the big missiles that are designed to reach Washington and New York. While several intercontinental ballistic missiles rolled down the streets of Pyongyang, conducting a flight test that proves one could fly that far, and land with accuracy, is so far only an aspiration.

Missing from the parade were the short- and medium-range missiles that have been successfully flight tested. American intelligence agencies believe some of those can carry operational nuclear arms. The critical one is the

Nodong, which has a range of 800 miles.

But the North Koreans are discovering — as the United States, the Soviet Union and China did before them — that it is far more complicated to design an intercontinental missile. With that weapons system, a warhead would move at four miles a second and re-enter the atmosphere in fiery heat — so, if badly engineered, it would burn up long before hitting a target. To reach their goal, North Korean weapons designers are looking to miniaturize their warheads, making them far lighter and more powerful.

The big effort these days is to merge two technologies: Get a missile that can cross the Pacific, and marry it to a warhead that can survive the ride. And this is why the United States is so desperate to stop the cycle of testing.

The cyber- and electronic warfare attacks that President Barack Obama ordered against the country’s missile fleet were intended to slow North Korea’s learning curve. The Musudan, which can travel 2,200 miles, has racked up an embarrassing failure rate of 88 percent — although how much of that is due to incompetence or outside meddling is not known.

Until the North Koreans figure out what is going wrong, and how to fix it, they appear hesitant to test the KN-14 and the KN-08, both of which are designed to hit the continental United States.

The diplomatic pressure from China to stop a sixth nuclear test at the Punggye-ri test site is intended to keep the North Koreans from making advances in warhead miniaturization and the design of a hydrogen bomb. As Mr. Obama noted before he left office, even failures are important learning tools for the North Koreans, aiding the trial-and-er-

ror process of making new warheads.

How long will it take for the North Koreans to solve those problems? The best guesswork is around 2020 — while Mr. Trump is still in his first term.

A FREEZE, TO WHAT END?

The strategy emerging from Mr. Trump’s national security team comes down to this: Apply overwhelming pressure on the North, both military and economic, to freeze its testing and reduce its stockpile. Then use that opening to negotiate, with the ultimate goal of getting the North Koreans to give up all their weapons.

Many experts, however, believe that is a fantasy, because Mr. Kim regards even a small arsenal as critical to his survival.

The upside of the strategy, if it works, is that the “nuclear freeze” would delay for years the day the North can fit a small, reliable, well-tested weapon atop a large, reliable, well-tested missile. The downside is that it would leave the North Koreans with a small, potent arsenal — one the United States would be essentially acknowledging, if not accepting.

That is why it will be hard for Mr. Trump to fulfill his vow to “solve this problem.”

And every day, there is the chance of miscalculation, or an accident.

At any moment, Dr. Hecker said on a call to reporters organized by the Union of Concerned Scientists, a live weapon could turn into an accidental nuclear detonation or some other catastrophe.

“I happen to believe,” he said, “the crisis is here now.”

David E. Sanger reported from Washington, and William J. Broad from New York.

WORLD

Hard slog for inquiry on Syrian war crimes

U.N. has a lot of evidence, but it's unclear if anyone will ever be prosecuted

BY RICK GLADSTONE

The chairman of a United Nations commission investigating possible war crimes in Syria has met that country's ambassador only once, he said. It happened during a chance encounter in a hallway after he had given a briefing to the General Assembly in New York.

"Then for 15 minutes, he gave me a lecture," the commission chairman, Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, said of his exchange with the Syrian envoy, Bashar al-Jaafari. "We don't have any hope that the Syrians will cooperate with us."

Members of the commission, created by the United Nations Human Rights Council in August 2011, have never been permitted to visit Syria by the government of President Bashar al-Assad, which appears to view them as accomplices of Mr. Assad's enemies.

The commission, with a support staff of about 25 people, has collected an enormous volume of material, which could be used in courts, about the atrocities committed in the six-year-old civil war by both Mr. Assad's side and the groups arrayed against him.

The Syrian Mission to the United Nations did not respond to emails requesting comment.

The material collected from outside the country includes testimony from more than 1,400 witnesses and victims. The commission also reviews and corroborates photographs, video, satellite imagery, and forensic and medical reports from governments and nongovernmental sources to determine if there are "reasonable grounds to believe" an atrocity has been committed, according to its website.

"The fact that we don't have access to Syria doesn't mean that we don't have access to information inside Syria," Mr. Pinheiro said last week in an interview that included some of his colleagues.

And, he said, the commission's work carries more credibility than evidence of war crimes in Syria compiled by other groups because its work is not financed by one side or the other.

"A lot of organizations are documenting the war crimes, they are serious and committed people, but of course they are funded by states that have a vested interest," Mr. Pinheiro said. "At least we are being funded by the regular budget of the United Nations."

Besides Mr. Pinheiro, a Brazilian political scientist, his fellow commissioners are Karen AbuZayd of the United States, a longtime United Nations diplomat, and Carla Del Ponte of Switzerland, a former war-crimes prosecutor.

The United Nations has a list of suspected war criminals in Syria.

They are also responsible for compiling a list of suspected perpetrators of war crimes in Syria, which is kept in a sealed envelope in the custody of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein. Even Mr. Hussein has not seen the list, Mr. Pinheiro said.

Ravi Kumar Reddy, the legal adviser for the Syria commission, said the list was updated annually and would remain secret.

Mr. Reddy would not disclose how many people were on the list, saying "it would be unwise." But Mrs. AbuZayd said, "Not as many as you'd like to think."

Mr. Pinheiro, Mrs. AbuZayd and some of their aides were in New York last week to meet with the United Nations secretary general, António Guterres, and to speak about some of their findings at a Security Council session.

Mr. Pinheiro and his aides told them that increasing numbers of civilians were now concentrated in northern Syria, where much of the fighting was among militants whose alliances kept shifting.

"New conflicts are emerging in which civilians are caught up between all these actors," said Anis Anani, the commission's political adviser. While the Islamic State militants are losing territory in northern Syria, he said, "it's also giving way to unstable dynamics on the ground."

Whether the commission's evidence will lead to an independent prosecution of suspected war crimes is unclear, even if the documentation is overwhelming. There is no clear path to make that happen.

The International Criminal Court, which was created for such a purpose, cannot open a case on Syria without a referral from the Security Council, where Russia — Syria's ally — would almost certainly block it.

"The prospect of an I.C.C. referral is zero," Mr. Pinheiro said.

But Mr. Reddy said the commission had supplied some information to judicial authorities in approximately 10 countries where legal cases related to the Syrian war were underway.

He declined to identify the countries or any of the cases.



CAROLINE GROUSSAIN/AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

The witness room facing the execution chamber at the Southern Ohio Correctional Facility, where Charles E. Coulson, a prosecuting attorney, saw the executions of two men. "Their executions did not bother me at all," he said.

Witnessing an execution

VARNER, ARK.

Lasting impressions for those who watch a prisoner's last breath

BY ALAN BLINDER AND MANNY FERNANDEZ

They often enter in silence. They almost always leave that way, too.

The death penalty holds a crucial, conflicted place in a nation deeply divided over crime and punishment, and whether the state should ever take a life. But for such a long, very public legal process, only a small number of people see what unfolds inside the country's death houses.

Witnesses hear a condemned prisoner's last words and watch a person's last breaths. Then they scatter, usually into the night. There is no uniformity when they look back on the emotions that surround the minutes when they watched someone die.

The most recent people to be executed, Jack H. Jones Jr. and Marcel Williams, died at the Cummins Unit here in southeast Arkansas on Monday night, the first time in almost 17 years that any state has executed two inmates on the same day. The state executed Ledell Lee here last Thursday, and plans to kill a fourth condemned man, Kenneth Williams, this week.

In separate phone interviews, five people who have witnessed executions — some years ago, one as recently as Mr. Lee's — reflected on what they had seen and what it meant to them.

The interviews have been condensed and edited.

CHARLES E. COULSON

Witnessed two executions as prosecuting attorney for Lake County, Ohio

In both cases, I was invited by the family to attend. The victim advocates sit down the night before, and you meet with them at dinner, and they go over step by step what's going to happen. They draw diagrams and show you where the death chamber is, where the defendant is going to be, where the defendant's family is going to be.

You're watching through glass, and then the process starts. They had a chance to offer last statements, and I was disgusted because they were so self-serving, narcissistic statements for these people who had caused so much pain and suffering.

We were just waiting for the signal; one time, it was when the warden touched his glasses. You're looking at the clock, but you're mostly watching the defendant, watching to see if he's still breathing or not. It is very quiet and respectful.

It's not like watching a gory murder in a movie. When I watched the executions, I was very impressed with the State of Ohio and how dignified they handled this. In my opinion, these two defendants didn't deserve any dignity whatsoever. The only time that I was emotionally involved was when I had to make the decision, and I actually had to go and speak and tell the jury that this man, sitting in a room a few feet away from me, should be put to death for his crime.

A prosecutor has to have no doubt: not proof beyond a reasonable doubt, but no doubt that a person committed those crimes. As long as you have no doubt, I don't think there's any valid argument against the death penalty.

These were two evil people, and their executions did not bother me at all. It's what I thought they deserved. I don't think about it much. It was done. It should have been done. I don't really think about it.

GAYLE GADDIS

Mother of Guy P. Gaddis, a murdered Houston police officer

I wanted to be sure it was finished, and that's why I went.

Before the execution, we were in a room without a clock. It's a terrible experience. We were there, it seemed, like hours, while they were making sure he didn't get a stay. We were all just miserable.

Then the warden came in and said, "Good news: There are no stays, and he's going to be gone," or something like that.

I went in the room, and I saw him strapped on that gurney. Then I couldn't watch it. They gave me a chair, and I just turned it the other way. One son was kind of hitting his elbow against the glass. My other son asked why he was doing that. He said, "I want him to look at me."

Edgar Tamayo was his name, and he wouldn't look or speak or anything. I was hoping he'd say, "I'm sorry," but he wouldn't even look at us.

It didn't hurt him: I would have liked to have stoned him to death or something horrible. He just got a shot like you were going to have some surgery. It was too easy, for all of the pain he caused my family all of these years.

Right at the end, all of a sudden, there was the sound of motorcycles revving up that went through the walls. I realized it was the motorcycle policemen — support from the policemen — and it made my heart feel good.

As we walked outside, his daughter was across the big driveway. She was holding up a great big sign: "Don't kill my dad." I did feel sorry for her. He just ruined all of these lives for so long.

I always thought the death penalty was right when there was no doubt that somebody was guilty. When this happened to me and my family, I was very supportive of the death penalty, and I still am.

They caught him right there where he shot my son. I just don't understand: 20 years before they killed him.

JENNIFER GARCIA

Assistant federal defender in Phoenix who witnessed one execution

He was my client. His name was Richard Stokley, and he was executed in December 2012.

Often for our clients, they didn't have people they could depend on, or who fought for them. Once we get on a case, we will stay on it, usually, until the end. The reason why we witnessed was, he asked us to. If he needed reassurance, he'd be able to see one of us smile at him.

By the time we got in there and walked into the witness room, I was just so tired, and I was so emotional, and I knew I had to hold it together for him, and I had to make sure he was O.K. through the process.

The execution itself was surreal. I cannot even tell you how unbelievable it was to see people deliberately get ready



MICHAEL STRAVATO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



ILANA PANICH-LINSMAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



JACOB SLATON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Gayle Gaddis, top, "wanted to be sure it was finished" when she saw her son's killer executed. The Rev. Carroll L. Pickett, middle, witnessed 95 executions. "You never get over it," he said. Marine Glisovic, above, witnessed an execution last Thursday.

to kill your client. With Mr. Stokley, they couldn't find a vein. We just sat there for a long time while they started with his hands and worked their way around the body, trying to get a vein. I was trying to maintain my composure because I didn't want him to look at me and seeing me upset or crying. But it was so hard to watch somebody do that to your client and be powerless.

When they pronounced him dead, I think I felt happy that he was no longer being hurt as part of the process. The fact that I knew it was over and there

was nothing else worse that was going to happen as part of the execution, that part was a relief. But over all, you feel shellshocked.

I wouldn't say I'm necessarily haunted by it, but I'm very aware of it. If I have a client who asks me to be there, I will be there. Until you are trapped there in that room under such tight control by the prison, and there is no way you can react to that somebody is killing somebody right in front of you, it's hard to know how you'll feel. But there is nothing you have already done in your life

that will make you go, "Oh, this is fine."

MARINE GLISOVIC

Reporter for KATV in Little Rock, Ark., and a media witness for last Thursday's execution of Ledell Lee

You walk in, and all the seats are to your left. It's almost set up like a mini-movie theater. We walked up to the front because there were three seats left open for us. There was a black curtain in front of four window panels.

They peeled back the curtain, and the inmate is lying down already, and he's got an IV in each arm. He's horizontal before us. He stared up the entire time. When they peeled that curtain down, they turned the lights off in our room, the witness room, so the only thing that was lit up was the chamber.

As it's going on, it's quiet. No one's saying anything. It was very sterile and clinical. It was like watching somebody be put to sleep, if you will.

We had an hour-and-a-half drive home. I got into Little Rock, stopped at the station, got into my car. It wasn't until I got to my friend's house that night, it hit me as a person, once I'd gotten out of the journalism mode. I don't even know how to describe how it hit me.

When I got to my friend's house, she opened the door, and I couldn't say much at first. I sat down.

I want to say I got to her house at about 2 in the morning and I didn't fall asleep until probably about 5. I just keep talking to her, and just going over it, over and over again.

It is probably the shortest yet longest 11 minutes of my life. No matter what anyone says, there's really nothing to prepare you for what you are about to see.

THE REV. CARROLL L. PICKETT

He witnessed 95 executions while he was a prison chaplain in Texas

One time, we had three nights in a row. They'd come in in the morning, and we'd do three executions on consecutive nights. Putting people through that is terrible.

I've seen a reporter pass out. He was about 6-foot-4. I'm on the inside in the death chamber itself, but I have a mirror, and I could see him just go collapse on the back row. And the major couldn't take him out because the law says you can't open the door until it's over.

That's one of the byproducts that people don't realize. Family members get sick. Witnesses get sick. Some of my best guards who were with them all day long — they got sick. The warden changed it to where I would have the same guys all day long, and those are the ones that just eventually had what they called a nervous breakdown, which I just think is horrible — to see some good-looking captains and lieutenants leave the system because they just can't do executions. It affects everyone, one way or another.

The victim's family is hurt, and the family of the individual. You're not just killing a person. You're killing his whole family. There's a lot of people involved in this, not just the poor kid lying on a gurney.

People don't realize that you never get over it, unless you're just cold and calculated. I'll never forget it. Not a day goes by. Not a day goes by. And I don't expect it to. If it does, then I didn't do what I was supposed to do, as a Christian and as a chaplain and as a human being.

Business

China’s traders take market on wild ride

HONG KONG

Hong Kong has become more volatile with entry of mainland investors

BY NEIL GOUGH

Meitu had been a snoozer of a stock since listing in Hong Kong in December. Then investors from mainland China had a chance to buy in.

Almost immediately, shares of Meitu, a Chinese smartphone app maker, jumped 80 percent in a week — then lost the gains nearly as fast. It briefly ranked as one the most actively traded stocks in Hong Kong, overtaking blue-chip names like HSBC.

The moves were remarkable for a small, unprofitable company that makes a selfie app that lets users morph into fairylike airbrushed versions of themselves.

What changed? Meitu became available to investors in mainland China in early March under a program linking stock markets there with Hong Kong’s.

“It is obvious that the boom was driven by money from China,” said one of those investors, Tan Xin, 35, a banker from Shanghai. Mr. Tan said he invested in Meitu but cashed out early, selling before the stock peaked.

“I didn’t expect it would be such a high rise,” he said.

China has disrupted the prices of global assets as varied as real estate in Manhattan and copper in London. The latest example is Hong Kong’s stock market, where new programs are allowing Chinese mom-and-pop retail investors to place bets outside mainland China.

Some experts say those investors have played a role in some wild rides. In fact, those experts say, the presence of more mainland Chinese investors has made the Hong Kong market more volatile, adding to pressures that prompted the city’s market officials in recent weeks to publicly defend its stability.

“Hong Kong’s capital market is not a stock casino,” Charles Li, a former investment banker who oversees the local stock exchange, said during a speech at the city’s Foreign Correspondents’ Club last month. Still, he added, “there’s always going to be a few dark corners and little alleys that ordinary folks don’t usually go in.”

Referring to some new investors from the mainland, he said, “the tourists don’t know better.”

China is slowly and fitfully lowering its financial barriers with the rest of the world, as Beijing tries to balance its desire for stability with its ambitions to

have a much greater say in the global conversation about money. Hong Kong’s experience shows that the process could involve spikes, drops and stumbles along the way, as vast sums of money — much of it controlled by people new to global finance — come to markets.

Two of China’s most high-profile financial liberalization projects involve Hong Kong. In 2014, it introduced the Hong Kong-Shanghai Stock Connect, which allows a total of \$3.4 billion to flow between the two markets each day. Two years later, last December, China began another \$3.4 billion-a-day program connecting Hong Kong to the stock market in the southern Chinese city of Shenzhen.

Because Hong Kong, a former British colony, operates outside China’s limits on cross-border money flows and has long been a capital of global finance, the programs offered many Chinese investors their first chance to invest in global stock markets.

Money can flow the other way, too. But the stock market crash in China two years ago and worries that its currency could fall in value have turned many overseas investors away from mainland stocks. Rather, the programs are drawing Chinese investors like Alex Nie, who says the mainland’s stock market lacks bargains.

Shanghai and Shenzhen shares “are overvalued,” said Mr. Nie, 37, an employee in the advertising industry in Beijing who has been buying Hong Kong stocks for the last two years and who says he is a long-term investor. “Many are not worth their prices,” he says of mainland valuations.

Many other Chinese stock investors bring a shorter-term mind-set. While private pension funds and mutual funds often steer stock markets in places like the United States, markets in China are more often swayed by amateur investors and well-heeled individuals willing to take big risks.

What China has brought to the Hong Kong stock market is “very much a herd mentality,” said Andrew Clarke, the head of trading in Hong Kong at the Mirabaud Group.

“It’s total speculation,” Mr. Clarke said. “People seize on these names, but it is not a form of investing.”

The first Stock Connect deal added a new element of uncertainty to the market, said Rui Huo, a researcher at RMIT University in Melbourne, Australia, who is a co-author of a recent paper on the effect of Stock Connect on volatility.

“Hong Kong Stock Connect has increased the volatility level of both Shanghai and Hong Kong markets,” he said.

Hong Kong has other attributes that encouraged China’s hair-trigger

HONG KONG, PAGE 8



JAKE NAUGHTON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Above, shopping at the Park Slope Food Coop in the New York City borough of Brooklyn and, below, the U.S. Steel mill in Granite City, Ill., in 2015, shortly before the plant was idled.

The shrinking middle class

Americans lagged behind Europeans, study covering the decade to 2010 shows

BY NELSON D. SCHWARTZ

Mike McCabe’s neighbors in rural Gillespie, Ill., consider him lucky. After being out of work for a year, he landed a job in January making cardboard boxes at a nearby Georgia-Pacific plant for \$19.60 an hour.

He would agree with them, were it not for the fact that his previous job in a steel mill near St. Louis paid \$28 an hour: “I’ve had to rethink my whole life to make ends meet on what I’m now making,” Mr. McCabe said. “The middle class is struggling for sure, and almost anybody in my position will tell you that.”

Middle-class Americans have fared worse in many ways than their counterparts in economically advanced countries in Western Europe in recent decades, according to a study released Monday by the Pew Research Center.

What is more, as Mr. McCabe’s experience suggests, the authors of the Pew study found a broader contraction of the American middle class, as the ranks of the poor and the rich have grown.

“Compared with the Western European experience, the adult population in the U.S. is more economically divided,” said Rakesh Kochhar, associate director for research at Pew. “It is more hollowed out in the middle. This speaks to the higher level of income inequality in the United States.”

For example, between 1991 and 2010, the proportion of adults in middle-income households fell to 59 percent from 62 percent, while it rose to 67 percent from 61 percent over the same period in Britain and to 74 percent from 72 percent in France.

Households that earned from two-



LUKE SHARRETT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

thirds to double the national median income were defined as middle income in the Pew study; in the United States that translated into annual income of \$35,294 to \$105,881, after taxes, in 2010.

A shrinking middle class is not cause for alarm if the reason for the contraction is that more people are moving up the income ladder, said David Autor, a professor of economics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

The proportion at the top did rise, but so did the proportion at the bottom, rising to 26 percent from 25 percent. That is much more worrisome, said Mr. Autor, who was not involved with the Pew study.

Moreover, the middle-income group was smaller — and the groups at either extreme larger — in the United States than in any of the 11 Western European countries studied.

And incomes in the middle rose faster in Europe than they did in the United States, according to Pew. Median incomes in the middle tier grew by 9 percent in the United States between 1991

and 2010, compared with a 25 percent gain in Denmark and a 35 percent increase in Britain.

The United States, including the middle class, has a higher median income than nearly all of Europe, even if the Continent is catching up. The median household income in the United States was \$52,941 after taxes in 2010, compared with \$41,047 in Germany and \$41,076 in France.

And while inequality may be widening, the proportion of households in the upper-income strata rose to 15 percent from 13 percent.

“Financially, the U.S. remains well ahead of the countries in Europe,” Mr. Kochhar said. “The difference is how incomes have evolved, and they are catching up.”

Although the cutoff of the study, 2010, may have highlighted weak income gains because it was in the immediate aftermath of the Great Recession, he said that was not enough to alter the study’s findings.

“It’s a clear trend that the middle

class in the U.S. is shrinking and not keeping up financially with the upper-income group,” he said. “There is an aura of redistribution of income from middle income to upper income.”

The study acknowledges that “middle class” can connote more than just income — like a college education, white-collar work, economic security, homeownership or even self-image — but for the purposes of the study, it was defined by income.

Whether in Europe or the United States, technological change and globalization mean that people who can adapt and learn new skills can reap bigger rewards, Mr. Kochhar said.

Since founding the LaSalle Network, a staffing company based in Chicago, with two employees nearly 20 years ago, Tom Gimbel has watched revenues grow to a projected \$70 million this year.

“I know a lot of people who have done much better in the last five years,” he said. “I have people working for me who made \$35,000 to \$60,000 a few years ago and are earning \$60,000 to \$150,000 now.”

Mr. Gimbel, who grew up in a comfortable Chicago suburb, has seen his own fortunes improve as well. “We didn’t want for anything, but my dad wasn’t rolling in money,” he said. “I’ve succeeded beyond where my parents were.”

On both sides of the Atlantic, the pressure on the middle class is translating into frustration with the political establishment and distrust of the elites.

Like his father and uncle, Mr. McCabe worked at the U.S. Steel mill in Granite City, Ill. But after the plant was idled in late 2015, he looked for a new job rather than waiting to be called back if the economy improved.

“You can only wait so long, and your unemployment runs out and you run out of choices,” he added. “I’m divorced with no kids. For people with kids, I can only imagine how tough they got it.”



JOHANNES EISELE/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

A replica of the Wall Street “Charging Bull” sculpture on the Bund in Shanghai.

Malaysia to pay Abu Dhabi \$1.2 billion

HONG KONG

BY NEIL GOUGH

In 2012, with help from Goldman Sachs, a Malaysian sovereign wealth fund called IMDB Development Berhad sold \$3.5 billion worth of bonds backed by an Abu Dhabi government fund to help it purchase power plants.

But behind the scenes, American officials have said, nearly \$1.45 billion was illegally redirected to Swiss bank accounts and ultimately into the hands of people involved in the deal.

That deal is now part of an international investigation into the Malaysian fund, known as IMDB, that has plagued Najib Razak, the prime minister of Malaysia. A civil complaint filed by Justice Department officials in the United States said that some of the money landed in the hands of Mr. Najib’s friends and associates, as well as officials and executives from Abu Dhabi’s sovereign wealth fund.

On Monday, Malaysia and Abu Dhabi moved to clean up one part of the scandal: who would pay back investors who bought the bonds.

The Abu Dhabi fund, the International Petroleum Investment Company, said in a stock exchange announcement

in London that Malaysia’s finance ministry and IMDB had agreed to pay \$1.2 billion to the Abu Dhabi fund by the end of the year as part of an agreement overseen by an arbitration panel in London.

The settlement also calls for the Malaysian side to take over all interest and principal payments on the two 2012 IMDB bonds, which charge interest rates of nearly 6 percent and are due for full repayment by 2022.

The deal on Monday is a significant step forward in cleaning up the financial mess related to IMDB. A year ago, IMDB defaulted on the bonds, setting off a dispute between the two countries over who would pick up the tab. Last year, the Abu Dhabi fund and its subsidiary, Aabar Investments PJS, said they were taking both IMDB and Malaysia’s finance ministry to arbitration in London, seeking \$6.5 billion.

But IMDB isn’t out of the woods yet. The fund remains the subject of investigations in Singapore, Switzerland, the United States and other jurisdictions. American officials are seeking to recoup \$1 billion they say was ultimately spent in the United States on purchases like luxury homes in Manhattan and Los Angeles, expensive paintings by Picasso and Monet, and on financing for the Hollywood movie “The Wolf of Wall Street.”

In Singapore, officials have closed



ADNAN ABIDU/REUTERS

Prime Minister Najib Razak of Malaysia has been plagued by inquiries into how money at a sovereign fund was dispersed.

branches of two Swiss banks and jailed a number of private bankers in relation to the case.

Officials in several jurisdictions have highlighted transfers involving Low Taek Jho, also known as Jho Low, a young Malaysian financier who parted with the likes of Paris Hilton. American officials say Mr. Low played a crucial role in laundering hundreds of millions of dollars from IMDB into the United States.

Mr. Low and Mr. Najib have previously denied wrongdoing.

“The government is pleased that IPIC and IMDB have resolved their differ-

ences in an amicable manner,” Tengku Sariffuddin, the press secretary to Mr. Najib, said in a written statement on Monday.

“These significant events represent the continued positive progress made by IMDB,” he added.

Goldman Sachs — which, according to American officials, received fees as high as 11 percent of the proceeds from the two IMDB bond sales, which were code-named Magnolia and Maximus — put its main banker on the IMDB account, Tim Leissner, on leave last year. Mr. Leissner has since left the bank, and in March, Singapore regulators banned him from dealing in securities in the city for 10 years. Goldman has said it is cooperating with the investigations.

Abu Dhabi dismissed the head of IPIC, Khadem al-Qubaisi, in 2015. That year, it also dismissed Mohamed Ahmed Badawy Al-Husseiny as the chief executive of one of IPIC’s subsidiaries, Aabar Investments PJS, which was tied to the IMDB deals. Both men were identified by American officials in their lawsuit in July.

IPIC did not return phone calls and a fax to its headquarters in Abu Dhabi on Monday, and attempts to reach Mr. Qubaisi through his former employer were unsuccessful.

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BUSINESS

Out of Jimmy Choo and into cappuccino

BY VANESSA FRIEDMAN
AND CHAD BRAY

Is coffee a better business than fashion?
The Reimann family, the reclusive German consumer goods billionaires who control JAB Holding, seems to think so.

On Monday, the luxury shoe brand Jimmy Choo, in which JAB owns a 67.6 percent stake, announced that it was putting itself up for sale. JAB acquired the brand in 2011 for 540 million pounds, or \$800 million at the time, and took it public in 2014.

JAB is also undertaking a strategic review of the Swiss leather goods brand Bally, “including a possible sale of the company.” A review of Belstaff, the British motocross-inspired brand acquired in 2008, is expected to follow.

The possible sell-off of the luxury brands comes as JAB Holdings — which since 2012 has built a coffee and food empire in the United States by acquiring American coffee brands including Peet’s Coffee & Tea, Caribou Coffee and Keurig Green Mountain — agreed this month to buy the sandwich chain Panera for \$7.5 billion, including debt.

According to documents seen by The New York Times, “JAB has, however, made significant investments in coffee and related areas in recent years, and as a result, now considers its investment in luxury as noncore.”

JAB, which has its headquarters in Luxembourg, wants to focus on its investments in Coty, in which it has a 36.84 percent stake, and the numerous high-end coffee businesses, which also include Stumptown Coffee Roasters and Intelligentsia Coffee & Tea.

Shedding its investments in the three leather-goods companies would take JAB out of the fashion industry, ending an eight-year effort to build a viable luxury group to compete with the Big Three — LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton, Richemont and Kering — and possibly signaling further consolidation in an industry already wrestling with slowing growth and changing consumer tastes. The strategy shift also speaks to the increasing desire of consumers to spend money on experience — including on morning drinks of choice — instead of, say, handbags.

JAB entered the luxury market with fanfare in 2007 and soon snatched up brands such as the American-based designer Derek Lam; the Italian handbag label Zaglani (then known for using Botox in its exotic-skin totes and purses to keep them supple); the British jeweler Solange Azagury-Partridge;



CALOGERO RUSSO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

The spring 2017 collection by Jimmy Choo, shown in Milan last September. The luxury shoe brand announced that it is putting itself up for sale. JAB, which owns a two-thirds stake, is reviewing its luxury holdings.

and leather-goods names like Jimmy Choo, Bally and Belstaff, all under a new division called Labelux.

Only four years later, however, it sold its stakes in the Lam and Azagury-Partridge businesses to the brands’ founders, and in 2014 decided to refocus

on leather goods, bringing the remaining brands directly under the control of JAB Holding (it closed Zaglani in 2015).

Though Jimmy Choo became the first footwear brand to list on a public market, riding a wave of accessories successes, Bally struggled to define itself in

a crowded market, taking tentative steps in apparel without much impact. Belstaff, too, despite a much-heralded campaign with David Beckham, found it difficult to break through.

Now, that grand experiment is apparently at an end.

According to the JAB announcement, there have not been any bids so far for Jimmy Choo, but the industry is bound to be watching closely for declarations of intent. This is especially the case given that footwear is something of a buzzing industry at the moment, with

department stores seemingly competing over who can open the largest shoe floor (a title now held by the Level Shoe District in Dubai, at 96,000 square feet).

Indeed, since the news broke, the price of Jimmy Choo shares has climbed more than 9 percent.

Partisan divide over state of the economy worries Bernanke



Andrew Ross Sorkin

DEALBOOK

Ben Bernanke is worried.
The former chairman of the Federal Reserve, who can offer his thoughts freely now that he is three years out of office, is not anxious about the objective, actual state of the economy. Rather, he is worried that Democrats and Republicans view the health of our nation completely differently.
To Democrats, things look dour indeed. To Republicans, things are rosy and looking better all the time.
“There is this kind of partisan coloring,” Mr. Bernanke told me last week in a rare interview while on a trip to Manhattan from Washington, where he lives.
“It is really striking,” he said. “The election result completely reversed

people’s views of the state of the economy. Republicans who thought that we were in a dystopia now think things look great, and Democrats, the opposite. And it shows that it isn’t all based on an objective assessment of the economy.”

Mr. Bernanke’s assessment is supported by recent research: A series of new surveys and polls show direct evidence that your politics increasingly define your view of the economy.

Just this month, the University of Michigan’s monthly survey of consumer sentiment diverged in an unprecedented way: Republicans are convinced that the economy is surging, while Democrats are concerned about an imminent recession.

To Mr. Bernanke, when the economy — as well as the basic statistics that undergird it — becomes politicized, the result is bad policy.

“A lot of the emotion is not really susceptible to nuanced policy arguments,” he said, shaking his head.

Mr. Bernanke has been thinking recently about the current state of politics and the economy.

Although he left the Federal Reserve in 2014 (“It’s a lot more relaxing to be in the civilian world,” he said), he recently had to write an afterword for the paperback version of his book “The Courage to Act,” and chronicles

his time at the Fed and captures his thinking during the financial crisis. The paperback is expected to come out in two weeks.

That exercise forced him to try to think through the implications of economic policy in an age of populism. And while wages may be stagnant for many, and some industries are shedding jobs, Mr. Bernanke is convinced that much of the country hasn’t appreciated just how good the economy is.

“The U.S. has done so much better than most of the rest of the world,” he said. “I mean if you have an international perspective and you travel around the world, then you hear from policy makers or average people in other countries: ‘Boy, the U.S. is doing great. We wish that Europe or Japan could do as well.’ ”

Still, Mr. Bernanke acknowledged that his view might appear to be one of a globalist or member of the elite.

“I fully acknowledge that doing well on the whole doesn’t mean doing well for everybody, and there are a lot of people who have been left behind or have not done as well as the average,” he said.

That unevenness, he said, has led to much of the populism sweeping the globe.

“I think a lot of the populist reactions in the world, perhaps even more



ALEX WONG/GETTY IMAGES

“The election result completely reversed people’s views of the state of the economy,” Ben Bernanke, the former Fed chief, said.

so than in the United States, is against immigration, which reflects cultural anxiety,” he said, explaining that he believes part of the country is asking, “Are we becoming a minority in our own country?”

He said he was struck by a recent economic paper by Anne Case and Angus Deaton of Princeton University looking at the high mortality rate among white men with only a high school education.

“Clearly there is very substantial stress among a large part of the population,” he said. “Some of it is cultural-social, and I’m not really an expert on those things. Some of it is economic

inequality, disruption from trade and technology, slow productivity growth, which means slow wage growth.”

Mr. Bernanke, who was always a careful speaker when testifying to Congress, was mostly circumspect when it came to directly commenting on President Trump. A rare moment of direct commentary came when the conversation turned to tax policy and some of the ideas the Trump administration has floated.

“In tax policy, corporate tax reform could be helpful if it stimulates capital investment, but as a practical matter it doesn’t look like major reform is very likely,” he said, brushing aside Mr. Trump’s claims that a tax code overhaul is imminent.

“We might have lower tax rates, maybe balanced to some extent by closing some loopholes, that would be a better policy,” Mr. Bernanke said. “I don’t think it’s going create a productivity miracle or anything like that, but it would be more efficient. It would probably improve investment a little bit.”

And while Mr. Bernanke was intrigued by the notion of a border adjustment tax, he was skeptical of this, too.

“I think politically it seems very unlikely to happen,” he said. He added that it was “a really interesting idea,

and it’s based on some very careful thinking about the tax code.”

The biggest headwind it faces, he said, is “there is not much confidence that the dollar would appreciate by 25 percent” — which would be required to make the math work — and “the import industry sees it as a big threat to their profits, so it’ll be highly contested.”

And what about Mr. Trump’s infrastructure plans?

“I think there is scope for smart infrastructure investment to be helpful,” Mr. Bernanke said, contending that it might make the country more productive by lowering the time people spent in traffic, for example.

Finally, he said he had been thinking about the potential for robots to take our jobs and upend the economy, something that he thinks should be watched.

“You have to recognize realistically that A.I. is qualitatively different from an internal combustion engine in that it was always the case that human imagination, creativity, social interaction, those things were unique to humans and couldn’t be replicated by machines,” he said. “We are coming closer to the point where not only cashiers but surgeons might be at least partially replaced by A.I.”

That could be a problem for Democrats and Republicans alike.

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China’s traders take market on wild ride

HONG KONG, FROM PAGE 7
traders. Compared with tightly controlled mainland markets, where stocks are permitted to rise or fall by a maximum of 10 percent a day, Hong Kong has fewer limits, and only on the biggest stocks, meaning hundreds more can double or fall to zero in minutes.

All those factors can work against mainland Chinese investors as well.

Shares of one company, China Huishan Dairy, fell 85 percent in two hours last month. Huishan later announced that it was negotiating interest and debt payments with 23 mainland banks and that all of its independent directors had resigned. The company then added it had filed a missing-person report with the police for its main executive in charge of treasury and cash operations.

Mainland investors were the biggest supporters of the stock the day it crashed, with buy trades from Shanghai through the Connect program accounting for more than a quarter of all turnover in the Hong Kong-listed stock before it was suspended from trading at midday. The identity of the investor or

Compared with the mainland, Hong Kong has fewer limits, meaning stocks can double or fall to zero in minutes.

investors could not be determined. With Meitu, the Chinese app maker, the reasons for the sudden moves were less clear.

Chinese-language reports in Hong Kong last month said the Securities and Futures Commission, the main stock market regulator, had requested the trading records of Meitu from local stockbrokers on three occasions since December, when it raised \$629 million in an initial public offering. The stock plunged shortly after the news of the regulator’s actions.

The commission declined to comment. Gary Ngan, the chief financial officer of Meitu, said the company had not received notice of an investigation into the trading.

Meitu, which has 520 million active

monthly users as of January, allows people to create idealized versions of themselves for sharing on social media. With a swipe, users of the app can whiten their face, taper their jaw, widen their eyes or make themselves thinner. It is hugely popular in China, where the company claims half of all photos circulated on social media were created with the app.

Mr. Ngan said the company chose to list in Hong Kong because it was the only place that provided broad access to a base of shareholders from foreign countries and, via the Stock Connect program, from mainland China.

“In Hong Kong, everyone, both in China and overseas, can buy the stock and become our shareholder,” he said.

Still, the whipsaw trading has prompted concern at Meitu.

“We would have preferred our stock not to be that volatile,” Mr. Ngan said, “because it’s not something that we can control.”

Cao Li contributed research from Beijing.

Opinion

French voters keep hope for Europe alive

Marine Le Pen's second-place showing behind a defender of Europe shows that the barriers against nationalism are holding on the Continent.

Sylvie Kauffmann
Contributing Writer

PARIS Back in February, President Trump spoke at a conservative convention about a friend named Jim, a “very, very substantial guy” who “loves the City of Lights” but does not go there any more because “Paris is no longer Paris.” Maybe Jim should consider coming back.

And Mr. Trump himself, who coldly tweeted two days before the first round of France's presidential election that the latest terrorist attack would have “a big effect” on the vote and told The Associated Press it would help Marine Le Pen of the far-right National Front, should also consider visiting France. He needs to get to know it better.

On Sunday, Paris still being Paris, Ms. Le Pen did not even reach 5 percent of the vote in the City of Lights. Campaigning on a nationalist, anti-globalization, anti-immigration platform, she made it into the second round with 21.3 percent of the vote nationwide, according to official final results that reported her achieving a better showing in rural and small-town France than in the cities.

She was outpaced, though, by Emmanuel Macron, a 39-year-old political upstart who won 24 percent of the vote despite having never held elected office; his movement, En Marche! —

In the end, in France, neither Donald Trump nor Vladimir Putin had a decisive influence on the election.

Onward! — has existed for less than a year. He scored best in the cities, where urban, educated

voters embraced his pro-Europe, open-borders, progressive agenda.

To New Yorkers and Londoners, this strong territorial divide may look familiar. There are undeniable echoes of the Brexit-Trump 2016 electoral insurrection in this first round. France is not immune to the powerful populist wave that has engulfed Western democracies over the past few years, starting with Hungary and Poland.

Here, anger over inequality and unemployment, resentment over globalization and immigration, and discontent with a political system that has run its course contributed to a notable statistic: Of the 11 candidates who competed on Sunday, eight were either critical of the European Union or squarely against it. Together they attracted 49.6 percent of the vote — almost half the electorate.

Yet the French vote has confirmed a trend apparent in recent elections in two other European Union member states, Austria and the Netherlands: Across the Channel from Britain, the dikes are holding. In all three countries, anti-populist forces managed to put forward a candidate or a platform offering an alternative innovative enough to counter the anger. In Austria, it was an ecologist presidential candidate. In the Dutch parliamentary election, it was two small, firmly pro-



POOL PHOTO BY LIONEL BONAVENTURE

European parties. In France, it was a young man who portrayed his lack of political experience as an asset and promised to transform the discredited system.

Let's face it: Old Europe is looking more resilient than the Anglo-Saxon world.

In the end, in France, neither Donald Trump nor Vladimir Putin — who ostentatiously welcomed Ms. Le Pen at the Kremlin a month before the election — had a decisive influence on the election. Nor did the Islamic State. What mattered was Europe. This remains the major issue, superseding all others because so much depends on it now.

For Marine Le Pen's supporters, the European Union is an abomination that violates national sovereignty and opens borders to mass immigration, while the eurozone prevents the French government from controlling its economic and monetary policy. To Mr. Macron, the European Union is the institution that can help France be a player and defend itself in a globalized world, while its open borders and common currency increase economic opportunities for its citizens. Basically,

Europeans are stronger together.

This is the clear choice French voters will face in the second round on May 7. A choice between two starkly different visions of Europe, between two opposite outlooks on the world: an open world versus a world of borders and barriers, modernity versus conservatism. The political consensus, based on the European project and liberal values, that allowed two major mainstream parties to govern France alternately on the right and the left for the past three decades has been shattered.

The candidate of the governing Socialist Party, Benoît Hamon, earned a devastating 6.4 percent of the vote, mirroring a trend in some other European countries. As for Les Républicains, the center-right party, it is also in deep trouble. Their candidate, former Prime Minister François Fillon, came in third on Sunday with 20 percent. Never before had the major party of the right been eliminated from the second round.

Would the party have fared better with a candidate who hadn't employed his wife in lucrative but elusive tasks and who paid for his own suits? Even

this is not sure, such is the thirst for renewal and the furor of “dégagisme” (“scram-ism”), as the far-left candidate Jean-Luc Mélenchon, who claimed 19.6 percent, called the anti-politician trend — only to fall victim of it, too.

This is the new landscape, shaped by the steady rise of the National Front and euroskepticism over the past decade. Rather than hiding behind it, Emmanuel Macron chose early in his campaign to fly the European flag. He astonished his rivals by winning support for the European Union, against all odds, at his rallies. And it worked.

He also managed to reverse the fear factor: By the end of the campaign, polls showed that more than two-thirds of French voters, still convinced of the benefits of a common currency, did not want to leave the eurozone, throwing Marine Le Pen's anti-euro agenda off balance. Mr. Macron embraced the French-German relationship, so vital to a unified Europe, and went to Berlin to meet Chancellor Angela Merkel, for whose immigration policy Marine Le Pen has only scorn.

Here is Mr. Macron's toughest challenge in the next two weeks: how to reconcile an electorate that has grown

more conservative and fearful of the effects of globalization with the idea that a stronger Europe is congruent with France's interests and will not harm the country's national identity. His frequent use of the words “protection,” his rousing calls to “patriots,” the French flags waving alongside the blue European banner with its gold stars at his rallies while supporters join him in singing “La Marseillaise,” show that he is aware of the danger of leaving the monopoly of patriotism to the National Front.

But even if he succeeds on May 7, he will still be left with other difficulties. Winning the June parliamentary elections — without a proper party — and achieving a majority to govern is one. Transforming the political system, as he has promised, to adjust it to the 21st century and give a voice to those voters who have felt excluded for so long is another. For a political novice, however talented and lucky, this is quite a tall order. But it is the condition for the dikes to continue holding up.

SYLVIE KAUFFMANN is the editorial director and a former editor in chief of *Le Monde*.

Emmanuel Macron, center, on Monday after coming in first in the first round of the French presidential election.

The urgency of ethnic nationalism

Left, center and right still aren't taking it seriously enough, in the U.S. or elsewhere.



David Leonhardt

A virulent nationalism, tinged with bigotry, is on the rise across much of the world. It helped elect Narendra Modi in India and sustains Vladimir Putin in Russia. It has vaulted Marine Le Pen to the final round of the French election. She is the underdog in the runoff, but it's chilling to see that this weekend she seems to have won voters under age 34.

In the United States, Donald Trump won the White House despite — and partly because of — his disdain for Mexicans, Muslims and African-Americans and his flirtation with anti-Semitic tropes.

In the face of this ethnic nationalism, citizens often face difficult choices. They have to decide how much of a priority to place on combating it.

Should voters eschew their favorite candidate and vote for one with the best chance to defeat the nationalist? Should policy experts be willing to work in an administration that plays footsie with intolerance? Should a museum dedicated to fighting hate, like the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, host a hateful president?

These choices often end up being more complicated than they first seem, and I don't want to suggest otherwise. But a disturbing pattern is still emerging.

Too many people — well-meaning people on both the left and right — have grown complacent about nationalist bigotry. They are erring on the side of putting other priorities first, and ethnic nationalism is benefiting.

Let's start on the political left. And, no, I'm not about to lapse into false equivalence. Ethnic nationalism is largely a force of the right. But the left needs to decide how to respond, and it hasn't been effective enough so far. It has underestimated the threat and put smaller matters ahead of larger ones.

After France's first round of voting, the leftist candidate Jean-Luc Mélenchon refused to endorse the last person who can prevent Le Pen from becoming president, Emmanuel Macron. A Le Pen presidency, to be clear, would likely tear Europe asunder, marginalize French citizens who hail from Africa and the Middle East and lead to a big expansion of security forces. It would be the biggest victory for Europe's far right since World War II, by far.

Yet Mélenchon still won't back Macron — a centrist former banker who was until recently a member of the Socialist Party. It's a classic case of political purism that may feel good, but can do grave damage.

Just look at the United States. Updated presidential vote totals show that Trump's margins in Michigan, in Pennsylvania and in Wisconsin —



BRENDAN MCDERMID/REUTERS

President Trump delivering a video message to the World Jewish Congress on Sunday.

which together would have swung the result — were smaller than the tally of Jill Stein, the Green Party candidate. It's impossible to know whether Stein's campaign cost Hillary Clinton the election, yet it clearly hurt. In a very close race, parts of the American left aided Trump.

I understand that this point enrages backers of Stein and Mélenchon. They have real differences of opinion with center-left candidates, and they want to win those debates. But the final round of an election that includes a

viable white nationalist isn't a time to hash out the future of progressive politics. It's a time to defeat racism.

A version of this dilemma also applies to the political center. Apolitical institutions have to decide whether they will treat ethno-centrists like Trump and Le Pen differently from other politicians. These institutions are right to resist becoming part of “the opposition,” because society needs nonpartisan institutions. But they also have to avoid compromising their mission.

The Holocaust Museum has put itself in a tricky spot. It invited Trump to give a major speech this morning, much as previous presidents have done. Of course, previous presidents didn't retweet neo-Nazi sympathizers, vilify Muslims or try to airbrush Jews out of the Holocaust.

Maybe the museum's leaders are confident Trump will use the speech as a turning point, which would be wonderful. But by conferring the museum's prestige on Trump, those leaders have a new responsibility to call out future dog whistles from the administration. The Holocaust Museum has effectively invested in Trump.

Finally, there is the political right. Most Republicans despise the notion that their ideology makes room for bigotry. Theirs is the party of Lincoln and of individual freedom, they say.

Fair enough. But that history brings responsibilities. Today's Republican Party has plainly made room for white nationalism, via Steve King, Steve Bannon, Jeff Sessions and Fox News, not to mention the president.

If the Holocaust Museum is now invested in Trump, Republicans are really invested in him and his fellow nationalists. You don't get to call yourself the party of Lincoln and stay silent when voting rights are abridged, hate crimes are met with silence and dark-skinned citizens are cast as un-American.

I never expected to live through a time when bigotry would again be as ascendant. But we are living in that time, and it brings a new set of choices.

OPINION

The New York Times

INTERNATIONAL EDITION

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MONEY TALKED LOUDEST AT INAUGURAL

Mr. Trump has done the bidding of businesses that gave millions, while failing to fulfill his promises to the middle class.

Bob Murray, one of the coal industry’s loudest voices, spent \$300,000 on President Trump’s inauguration and got a lot more than good seats.

Mr. Murray — whose Murray Energy is a serial violator of federal health and safety rules — demanded that Mr. Trump gut regulatory oversight.

After Mr. Trump’s inauguration Mr. Murray, his son Ryan and Kevin Hughes, Murray Energy’s general manager, stood beaming in the White House as Mr. Trump signed a law killing a rule banning coal mining waste from waterways.

Coal, oil, gas and chemical industries, technology and pharmaceutical companies contributed a big chunk of the record \$107 million collected to pay for the inauguration, according to numbers released by the inaugural committee last week. That’s more than double the \$53 million President Obama raised in 2009, for bigger festivities that drew many more attendees.

Mr. Trump has dutifully done the bidding of donors who have been brazen in demands for regulatory favors, while failing to make any progress on the health insurance, jobs and middle-class tax cuts he promised to his working-class base.

AT&T gave more than \$2 million in cash, plus in-kind donations; Verizon and Comcast pitched in smaller amounts. They’ve been rewarded with efforts by the Federal Communications Commission to scuttle net neutrality and other rules they don’t like. The pharmaceutical companies Amgen and Pfizer kicked in a total of \$1.5 million. After Mr. Trump’s White House meeting with Big Pharma, he backed off his campaign promise that government would negotiate lower drug prices for Americans.

Last week, Thomas Barrack Jr., a financier who chaired the inaugural committee, maintained that the \$107 million was given “to commemorate the cornerstone of our American democratic process.” If the cornerstone of our American democratic process is influence-peddling, he’s right.

LET THE WORLD CONDEMN DUTERTE

The International Criminal Court should agree to a lawyer’s request that it investigate the Philippine president’s mass killings.

A Filipino lawyer formally asked the International Criminal Court on Monday to charge President Rodrigo Duterte and 11 officials with mass murder and crimes against humanity over the extrajudicial killings of thousands of people in the Philippines over the past three decades. The I.C.C. should promptly open a preliminary investigation into the killings.

The lawyer, Jude Josue Sabio, filed the complaint in his own name, but he also represents two men who have publicly said they were paid members of the death squad that Mr. Duterte set up in Davao City when he was the mayor to hunt down drug dealers. After he was elected president last year, Mr. Duterte took the killing campaign nationwide, effectively declaring an open season for police and vigilantes on drug dealers and users. In all, Mr. Sabio said in the 77-page filing, more than 9,400 people have been killed, most of them poor young men, but also bystanders, children and political opponents.

Mr. Sabio is not the first to accuse Mr. Duterte of mass killings — so have Human Rights Watch, in 2009; Amnesty International, this January; and some brave Filipino politicians. The I.C.C. chief prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, declared last October that the court was “closely following” developments in the Philippines.

There are reasons why the I.C.C. might be reluctant to go after Mr. Duterte. He is enormously popular with many Filipinos, for whom narcotics are a major scourge.

The court, moreover, was created to prosecute cases of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes among member countries only when their national courts are unwilling or unable to do so. Those conditions might be met if the Philippines House of Representatives, dominated by Mr. Duterte’s allies, quashes, as expected, an impeachment motion filed by an opposition lawyer. But there is already more than enough evidence for a preliminary investigation, which would send an unmistakable signal to Mr. Duterte that he may eventually have to answer for his crimes, and would encourage governments to take measures against him, such as imposing tariffs on Philippine goods.

And if the findings of Mr. Sabio, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and politicians, or the confessions of the former death squad members, are not enough evidence, there are Mr. Duterte’s savage words. “Hitler massacred three million Jews. Now, there is three million drug addicts. I’d be happy to slaughter them,” he told reporters in one of his most outrageous statements (and misstating the figure for the Holocaust, which is six million).

This is a man who must be stopped.

Painters deserve their deduction

Michael Rips

Over the past year, as my friend Jim Rosenquist grew increasingly ill, I had the opportunity to sit with him in his loft in Lower Manhattan and discuss his life and concerns. About his place in art history as a pioneer of Pop Art painting, there was no discussion. What he did address was the future of art itself. He was worried about what would become of museums and art foundations — not because the public lacked interest in what they offered, but rather because the quality of those offerings, owing to federal legislation, was rapidly eroding.

When Jim died in March, I thought back to our conversations and began to look at the legislation he had mentioned, and that, in turn, led me to an unexpected place: Richard Nixon’s 1969 tax return.

That return had two problems. First, it deducted the value of a gift — the donation of Nixon’s vice-presidential papers to the National Archives — that was not actually made until 1970. Second, the value placed on that gift by Nixon was considered by many, most notably members of Congress, to be substantially inflated.

As to the first, Edward Morgan, the Nixon aide who signed the deed of gift on Nixon’s behalf, was indicted and sentenced to prison.

As to the second, Nixon was not alone: Concerns had been raised regarding the value of similar deductions taken by Lyndon Johnson and Hubert Humphrey. So Congress revised the tax code: Before 1970, writers, artists and composers could deduct the fair market value of the works they gave; after the revision, creators of donated works were limited to the costs of the materials that went into the work. Thus, the owner of a painting could donate it to a museum and deduct the painting’s full market value; but if that same work had been donated by the artist, the deduction would be limited to the costs of the paints and canvases.

The impact of the legislation was immediate — and catastrophic. Gifts by artists, writers and musicians to charitable institutions fell radically, and have never recovered.

The Museum of Modern Art, in the



three years before the revision, received 321 gifts from artists; in the three years after the change, only 28 works were donated. The Library of Congress reported that contributions of manuscripts to the library fell from approximately 230 musical manuscripts and over 100,000 literary manuscripts annually to zero in 1971 and 1972. James Billington, the librarian of Congress emeritus, described the tax revision as the “single major impediment to developing the library’s graphic art holdings.” A study of the

tax revision published in The Yale Law Journal concluded that the “virtual cessation of charitable giving by creators has become a fact of life for museums and university libraries nationwide.”

With recent escalations in art prices and cutbacks in public funding of cultural institutions, few museums can afford the market prices for major works of art and important manuscripts.

Consequently, many are now sold to private collectors — and since many of

these collectors now live outside the United States, it’s unlikely that the works will ever end up in an American museum or archive.

Legislation to restore the market value deduction to artists, writers and composers was just introduced in Congress, as similar bills have been proposed over the last decade. Jim Rosenquist had testified in support of those efforts. The current draft legislation incorporates protections to prevent the sorts of abuses that gave rise to the revision of the tax code, but the climate in Washington will make passage difficult.

Legislation, however, may no longer be necessary, and that hope comes from an unlikely source — Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission, the 2010 Supreme Court decision equating corporations with individuals for purposes of the First Amendment. Citizens United made explicit a current of constitutional law that focused on government restraints based on the identity of the speaker, rather than the subject matter of the speech.

The application of Citizens United is straightforward: Donations are a protected form of “symbolic speech” (such as gifts of money, and flag-burning), and the withdrawal of the fair market tax deduction from the creators of those works is — under the precedent of Citizens United — a prohibited form of speaker discrimination.

The government would have to demonstrate a “compelling state interest” for removing the deduction — nearly impossible when attempting to justify the denial of the fair market value deduction to those who donate their own work to cultural institutions.

All that needs to happen is for an artist who has donated work in this way to object to the I.R.S. over the denial of a fair market deduction; then the case would go to federal court. Easy, doable and should be done.

Returning the market value deduction to artists, writers and composers would encourage them to donate culturally and historically significant works to American museums. This would not only relieve those institutions and the taxpayers who support them of the cost of purchasing such works, but also free those institutions to spend money on programs devoted to education and building. An unanticipated consequence of Citizens United, but one that would have pleased my friend Jim.

MICHAEL RIPS, the author of “Pasquale’s Nose: Idle Days in an Italian Town,” is a lawyer.

Is it time to break up Google?

Jonathan Taplin

In just 10 years, the world’s five largest companies by market capitalization have all changed, save for one: Microsoft. Exxon Mobil, General Electric, Citigroup and Shell Oil are out and Apple, Alphabet (the parent company of Google), Amazon and Facebook have taken their place.

They’re all tech companies, and each dominates its corner of the industry: Google has an 88 percent market share in search advertising, Facebook (and its subsidiaries Instagram, WhatsApp and Messenger) owns 77 percent of mobile social traffic and Amazon has a 74 percent share in the e-book market. In classic economic terms, all three are monopolies.

We have been transported back to the early 20th century, when arguments about “the curse of bigness” were advanced by President Woodrow Wilson’s counselor, Louis Brandeis, before Wilson appointed him to the Supreme Court. Brandeis wanted to eliminate monopolies, because (in the words of his biographer Melvin Urofsky) “in a democratic society the existence of large centers of private power is dangerous to the continuing vitality of a free people.” We need look no further than the conduct of the largest banks in the 2008 financial crisis or the role that Facebook and Google play in the “fake news” business to know that Brandeis was right.

While Brandeis generally opposed regulation — which, he worried, inevitably led to the corruption of the regulator — and instead advocated breaking up “bigness,” he made an exception for “natural” monopolies, like telephone, water and power companies and railroads, where it made sense to have one or a few companies in control of an industry.

Could it be that these companies — and Google in particular — have become natural monopolies by supplying an entire market’s demand for a service, at a price lower than what would be offered by two competing firms? And if so, is it time to regulate them like public utilities?

Consider a historical analogy: the early days of telecommunications.

In 1895 a photograph of the business district of a large city might have shown 20 phone wires attached to most buildings. Each wire was owned by a different phone company, and none of

them worked with the others. Without network effects, the networks themselves were almost useless.

The solution was for a single company, American Telephone and Telegraph, to consolidate the industry by buying up all the small operators and creating a single network — a natural monopoly. The government permitted it, but then regulated this monopoly through the Federal Communications Commission.

AT&T (also known as the Bell System) had its rates regulated, and was required to spend a fixed percentage of its profits on research and development. In 1925 AT&T set up Bell Labs as a separate subsidiary with the mandate to develop the next generation of communications technology, but also to do basic research in physics and other sciences. Over the next 50 years, the basics of the digital age — the transistor, the microchip, the solar cell, the microwave, the laser, cellular telephony — all came out of Bell Labs, along with eight Nobel Prizes.

In a 1956 consent decree in which the Justice Department allowed AT&T to maintain its phone monopoly, the government extracted a huge concession: All past patents were licensed (to any American company) royalty-free, and all future patents were to be licensed for a small fee. These licenses led to the creation of Texas Instruments, Motorola, Fairchild Semiconductor and many other start-ups.

True, the internet never had the same problems of interoperability. And

Let’s face it: The biggest tech companies are monopolies.

Google’s route to dominance is different from the Bell System’s. Nevertheless it still has all of the characteristics of a public utility.

We are going to have to decide fairly soon whether Google, Facebook and Amazon are the kinds of natural monopolies that need to be regulated, or whether we allow the status quo to continue, pretending that unfettered monoliths don’t inflict damage on our privacy and democracy.

It is impossible to deny that Facebook, Google and Amazon have stymied innovation on a broad scale. To begin with, the platforms of Google and Facebook are the point of access to all media for the majority of Americans. While profits at Google, Facebook and Amazon have soared, revenues in media businesses like newspaper publishing or the music business have, since 2001, fallen by 70 percent.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, newspaper publishers lost over half their employees between 2001 and 2016. Billions of dollars have been reallocated from creators of content to owners of monopoly platforms. All content creators dependent on advertising must negotiate with Google or Facebook as aggregator, the sole lifeline between themselves and the vast internet cloud.

It’s not just newspapers that are hurting. In 2015 two Obama economic advisers, Peter Orszag and Jason Furman, published a paper arguing that the rise in “supernormal returns on capital” at firms with limited competition is leading to a rise in economic inequality. The M.I.T. economists Scott Stern and Jorge Guzman explained that in the presence of these giant firms, “it has become increasingly advantageous to be an incumbent, and less advanta-



geous to be a new entrant.”

There are a few obvious regulations to start with. Monopoly is made by acquisition — Google buying AdMob and DoubleClick, Facebook buying Instagram and WhatsApp, Amazon buying, to name just a few, Audible, Twitch, Zappos and Alexa. At a minimum, these companies should not be allowed to acquire other major firms, like Spotify or Snapchat.

The second alternative is to regulate a company like Google as a public utility, requiring it to license out patents, for a nominal fee, for its search algorithms, advertising exchanges and other key innovations.

The third alternative is to remove the “safe harbor” clause in the 1998 Digital Millennium Copyright Act, which allows companies like Facebook and Google’s YouTube to free ride on the content produced by others. The reason there are 40,000 Islamic State videos on YouTube, many with ads that yield revenue for those who posted them, is that YouTube does not have to take responsibility for the content on its network. Facebook, Google and Twitter claim that policing their networks would be too onerous. But that’s preposterous: They already police their networks for pornography, and quite well.

Removing the safe harbor provision would also force social networks to pay for the content posted on their sites. A simple example: One million downloads of a song on iTunes would yield the performer and his record label about \$900,000. One million streams of that same song on YouTube would earn them about \$900.

I’m under no delusion that, with libertarian tech moguls like Peter Thiel in President Trump’s inner circle, antitrust regulation of the internet monopolies will be a priority. Ultimately we may have to wait four years, at which time the monopolies will be so dominant that the only remedy will be to break them up. Force Google to sell DoubleClick. Force Facebook to sell WhatsApp and Instagram.

Woodrow Wilson was right when he said in 1913, “If monopoly persists, monopoly will always sit at the helm of the government.” We ignore his words at our peril.

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Work, Mr. Macron, work



Roger Cohen

LONDON Can a graduate of France's elite schools, a onetime investment banker and the former economy minister of an unpopular Socialist president prevail at a time of French disgust with politics-as-usual?

I ask the question because the greatest danger to Emmanuel Macron, at once the fresh face of French politics and a familiar product of the French system, is the assumption that his first-round electoral victory makes triumph in the second round inevitable.

It is not. Macron, a political neophyte, has work to do.

Marine Le Pen, who took 21.4 percent of the first-round vote to Macron's 23.9 percent, is not the favorite, but she is plausible in a way her father Jean-Marie Le Pen was not when he was crushed in the second round of the 2002 election. Some 7.6 million French people voted for her, 2.8 million more than her father in the first round 15 years ago.

Never before has the National Front, a racist party, taken more than 20 percent of the vote. That this result for Le Pen has provoked relief in some circles is a measure of her party's steady advance.

Disruption is in the air, and Le Pen's anti-immigrant, anti-European, nationalist agitation is its most powerful expression. The establishment parties of center-left and center-right have been blown away, and with them some of the essential fabric of the Fifth Republic.

This same establishment's calls now to throw up the Republic's rampart against a xenophobic party issued from

the cesspool of Vichy Fascism are sincere but no longer determinant. Macron will have to win this on May 7, not expect Le Pen to lose it. The fracture between globalized metropolises and depressed regions that produced political upheaval in Britain and the United States applies equally to France.

Paris gave Le Pen less than 5 percent of the vote; in the struggling east of the country she thrived. Macron has to erect a barrier against the prevailing global cultural upheaval. For France and for Europe, it is critical he does. The European Union can survive a British exit; it will buckle under a French exit.

We know the drumbeat of the next two weeks. Le Pen will attack Macron as the puppet of the man he served, President François Hollande. She will

Marine Le Pen has a plausible path to victory in France. Arrogance would be Emmanuel Macron's worst enemy.

attack him as the Rothschild banker, the man of "the system," the elitist and the globalist. She will attempt to exploit the same diffuse anger, resentment and anxiety that produced Brexit and President Trump. She will work on

fertile ground; nobody does malaise like the French. Russia, intent on undermining the European Union, will help her where it can.

Some 41 percent of French voters of the extreme right and far left voted for candidates favoring a possible exit from the European Union and rejection of the euro.

On the left, that candidate was Jean-Luc Mélenchon, whose "Unbowed France" movement gained almost 20 percent of the vote.

Mélenchon has not yet urged his supporters to stop Le Pen. Many will abstain; some may even vote for her. Extremes do converge. Add to this the defection to Le Pen of the more right-wing supporters of the conservative François Fillon: the threat to Macron

becomes clear.

Polls, which were accurate on the first round, show Macron with a clear lead over Le Pen. Macron's worst enemy would be arrogance. Where Hillary Clinton paid little or no attention to the reasons for Bernie Sanders' popularity, Macron will have to reckon with the Mélenchon factor.

When I was in France last month I listened in some wonder as Macron declared: "Modernity is disruptive and I endorse that." Bracing and brave words, like his emotional support for the European Union and empathy with refugees. But it is the preservation of the French welfare state, the construction of a "social Europe" and the fight against inequality that Mélenchon supporters focus on.

More than any other Western industrialized nation France has philosophical objections to 21st-century capitalism. Macron will have to temper his innovative, tech-friendly, free-market instincts with a heavy dose of Gallic solidarity. That will be a delicate balancing act.

Macron, 39, has managed it up to now, conjuring a new movement from nothing in the space of a year. That's a tribute to his ability to embody renewal and hope despite attempts to portray him as merely young. Now comes his, and the French Republic's, supreme challenge.

The French economic model amounts to a structural choice for high unemployment in exchange for comprehensive social protection. Everyone knows that; nobody has been able to change it. In some measure this impasse explains French anger. The young can't find work. There's a feeling of being stuck. Insecurity has exacerbated that frustration, as has the breakdown of the model that integrated generations of immigrants. Le Pen has the facile, vile answers to all this. Macron has the genuine ambition, as he put it to me, to "transform" France "at its deepest level."

Europe and France need him. His mantra now must be: work, boldness, humility.

The Jane Addams model



David Brooks

These days everything puts me in mind of Jane Addams. Many of the social problems we face today — the fraying social fabric, widening inequality, anxieties over immigration, concentrated poverty, the return of cartoonish hyper-masculinity — are the same problems she faced 130 years ago. And in many ways her responses were more sophisticated than ours.

Addams was born to an affluent family in Cedarville, Ill., in 1860. She was a morally ambitious young woman who dreamed of some epic life of service without much idea about how it might come about. In her teenage years, she earnestly set to reading — "Pilgrim's Progress," Plutarch's "Lives," "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" — but in her twenties she was one of those young people who don't get to themselves quickly. They spend years in study and in acquiring degrees with a vague sense they are preparing for something, without actually leaping into what it is they might want to do.

Addams took a Grand Tour of Europe and found herself in a vegetable market as the leftovers were being tossed to a crowd of paupers, who stood with their grasping hands upraised. The image had a powerful effect on her. Forever after, the sight of hands raised up, even in dance and calisthenics, caused her to feel the pain of poverty and want.

In London, she visited a place called Toynbee Hall, a settlement house where rich university men organized social gatherings with the poor in the same way they would organize them with one another. Addams returned to Chicago and set up Hull House, an American version of the settlement idea.

As today, it was a time when the social fabric was being torn by technological change. Addams moved her family possessions, including the paintings, books and heirloom silver,

into a large mansion in a blighted district. The idea was to give the dispossessed the same sort of refined and cultivated home environment that she had known, and thus create a network of family and neighborly bonds. Before long, 2,000 a day were streaming through the place, taking and teaching courses, offering and receiving day care, doing the housekeeping, conducting sociological research.

This was not rich serving the poor (Addams hated paternalism). It was rich and poor, immigrant and old stock, living and working in reciprocity, and as a byproduct bridging social chasms and coming to understand one another. For example, Addams thought it was especially important to put immigrant adults into the role of teachers, because it affords "a pleasant change from the tutelage in which all Americans, including their own children, are so apt to hold them."

There were classes in acting, weaving, carpentry, but especially in art history, philosophy, and music. Addams was convinced that everyone longs for beauty and knowledge.

Everyone longs to serve some high ideal. She believed in character before intellect, that spiritual support is as important as material support. And yet "the soul of man in the commercial and industrial struggle is under siege."

High culture was her way to elevate the desires and tastes of all who passed through. Residents were surrounded with copies of Rembrandts and presented with Greek tragedies and classical concerts. One new immigrant walked in and Addams handed him an Atlantic Monthly and recommended an essay he could barely understand. But it was a sign of respect and equality, and access to a different world. Even poor kids, she believed, should "share in the common inheritance of life's best goods."

Our antipoverty efforts tend to be systematized and bureaucratized, but Hull House was intensely personalistic. She sought to change the world by planting herself deeply in a particular neighborhood. She treated each person as a unique soul.

Addams had amazing capacity to work from the specific case to the



HARRIS & EWING/LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Jane Addams in 1913.

general philosophy, and had the ability to apply an overall strategy to the particular incident. There are many philanthropists and caregivers today who dislike theory and just want to get practical. It is this sort of doer's arrogance and intellectual laziness that explains why so many charities do no good or do positive harm. Addams, by contrast, was both theorist and practitioner.

In her day, like our own, public life was dominated by manly men who saw politics as a competition between warriors and who sought change through partisan chest thumping and impersonal legislative action.

Addams was certainly political, but she defended the primacy of the "woman's" sphere. People are really shaped by dense intimate connections. People thrive in "familiar contexts." As Jean Bethke Elshtain wrote in her biography, "The world of women was, for her, a dense concoction of imperatives, yearnings, reflections, actions, joys, tragedies, laughter, tears — a complex way of knowing and being in the world."

Tough, Addams believed that we only make our way in the world through discipline and self-control. Tender, she created an institution that was a lived-out version of humanist philosophy. In today's terms, she was a moral and religious traditionalist and an economic leftist, and an incredible role model for our time.

Reeling from a cruel April in Kashmir

WAHEED, FROM PAGE 1

Many in India expressed shock and revulsion. Yet large sections of India's booming news media — some editors, some columnists — openly celebrated what could well be a violation of the Geneva Conventions. India's attorney general defended the use of human shields, praising the officer who made the decision.

The army should be applauded, he said. A judge on India's Armed Forces Tribunal, which hears court-martial appeals, tweeted that it was "an innovative idea." Mr. Ahmad was turned into a war cry on prime-time television and on social media.

In an even grislier turn, graphic videos of torture of Kashmiris by the armed forces surfaced, one after another — a visual guide of Indian rule over Kashmir. In one video, soldiers can be seen landing blows on boys inside an army vehicle as they're exhorted to shout anti-Pakistan slogans. As I watched these moving images, I locked my room lest my small children hear the cries.

In the 1990s, a decade bookmarked by massacres, torture, assassinations, extrajudicial murders, exodus of Kashmiri Hindus and the making of mass graves in the mountains, it was almost routine for Indian troops to force civilians into encounter sites. I remember young and old men who sometimes spoke casually about having spent a day at the front of cordon-and-search military operations.

In an instance in May 2001, the Indian Army forced the two sons of a woman from Anantnag district of Kashmir to walk into a school complex, where they were engaged in battle with insurgents, with land mines in their hands. One son, 17-year-old Shafi, was killed, a human shield discarded after use.

As with the use of endemic and systematic torture, the practice of using human shields is a yet mostly underreported aspect of India's actions in Kashmir. When generations are busy counting and mourning the dead during the day, history writing at night takes a back seat.

But it's perhaps also to do with a hitherto unseen tonal shift in the public imagination in India. When eight protesters were shot dead on Sunday, and around 20 shot in the eyes with pellets, much of India's broadcast media chose to invest airtime in a disturbing video that showed an Indian trooper harassed and slapped by some protesters. Many news channels decided to whip up hostility toward Kashmiris. The theater turned sinister. Soon, celebrities, cricketers, actors, journalists and politicians joined in a digital witch-hunt. Taking to Twitter, a former captain of India's formidable cricket team effectively called for mass murder. A senior editor likened Kashmiris to "mosquitoes."

Only a few years ago, India, with all its aberrations and dizzying complexity, with all its beauties and cruelties, could still lay claim to being a liberal democracy. All this — the mainstreaming of murderous hate — comes at a time of near-incendiary mutation of the foundational principles of India, and to the idea of India herself. The spectacular consolidation of power by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist party, the B.J.P., has been

synchronous with the spread of hate speech and violence against India's minorities — Muslims, Dalits and Christians.

To keep aggressive majoritarianism in constant currency, India's far right needs a constant other. While that "other" has almost always been the hapless Indian Muslim, the perfect other now is the Kashmiri Muslim, who has never submitted to India's sovereignty.

The grammar and the ammunition of words to keep the nationalist frenzy on steam are now sadly supplied by sections of the Indian media. The pursuit of facts has been replaced by the broadcasts of mendacity. I don't remember seeing any country's media as hostile to an entire people as a lot of Indian media is to the people of Kashmir.

Some of the torture videos in circulation appear to have been filmed by the troopers themselves, gladiatorial spectacles for cheerleaders in studios, in front of TV screens or in what the writer Pankaj Mishra calls "the Twitter burlesque."

Thousands of students in school uniforms (blazers, ties, scarves) from campuses across Kashmir have come out spontaneously to register dissent. I desperately hope they, too, aren't shot at to bring forth a bloody harvest to satiate the rising bloodlust in Delhi. With the world falling apart, India could perhaps show a light. Not crush Kashmir but solve one of the world's longest-running conflicts along with Pakistan — even if the relationship between the forever estranged nuclear siblings is at its lowest.

MIRZA WAHEED is the author of the novels "The Collaborator" and "The Book of Gold Leaves."



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SCIENCE

Tough, prickly and beautiful

BASICS
ANZA BORREGO, CALIF.

As rains ease in the West, cactuses dazzle; but many species are threatened

BY NATALIE ANGIER

A cactus in bloom is pure poetry — recalling particularly that famous line by Walt Whitman: “Do I contradict myself? Very well, then I contradict myself.”

In the desert here, the thick, spine-studded paddles of a beavertail cactus look as surly as always, ready to smack you into next week if you get within striking distance.

Yet now, in a so-called superbloom spring that many judge the best in decades, the paddles are topped by dazzling fuchsia flowers the size of teacups that beckon you closer to feast on the view.

The fish hook cactus lives up to its name, its surface covered with long, curved barbs and a snarl of fibrous hairs; but now it wears a festive garland of creamy white petals smartly trimmed in rouge. *Keep away. Come closer.*

You got a problem with that?
“If somebody had taken me from rural Illinois, where I grew up, and dropped me here into this desert landscape to see all these fat succulent things,” said Jon P. Rebman, the chief botanist at the San Diego Natural History Museum and a cactus taxonomist, “I would have thought I was on Mars.”

Dr. Rebman, 52, who is tall, fit, demonically ebullient and has deep dimples on either side of his face, said he was “coerced” into studying cactuses as a graduate student, but the arranged marriage took. “Cactuses are weird and attractive, and their giant, satiny flowers are stunning,” he said. “I fell in love, and I never looked back.”

For Dr. Rebman and other researchers who study the cactus family, Cactaceae, the 20-grit charm and mulish creativity of their subjects are always compelling, whether the plants are flowering wildly in response to rain after a sustained drought, as happened this year in California and parts of the Southwest, or simply doing what cactuses do best, which is persist in some of the world’s most parched and hostile environments for decades or longer.

“In some of the dry valleys of Mexico, they have giant columnar cactuses that are hundreds and hundreds of years old,” said Erika Edwards, an associate professor of ecology and evolutionary biology at Brown University who studies photosynthesis in cactuses and other succulents.

While the basic contours of the cactus survival plan have been known, researchers are still unearthing surprising details about how the plants adapt to adversity, and how they subtly manipulate the niches they inhabit and the other creatures they encounter to suit their defense and propagatory needs.

Recently, for instance, scientists have found that as many as 100 species of cactuses are essentially breasts for ants, exuding through tiny nipples in their flesh a minute but irresistible supply of sweet nectar that persuades the insects to nest at the cactal base.

The besotted ants in turn defend their green udder against potentially destructive insect predators; clean away pathogenic fungi and bacteria; fertilize the soil with nitrogenous waste; and spread the cactus’s seed to new sites.

Other researchers have discovered that a cactus’s roots can operate like



PHOTOGRAPHS BY CATTY FARES FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Each teddy bear cholla is unique. This species of cactus releases pads and barbs that are carried on the wind to patches of soil where they will take root and grow.



Wildflowers intertwine with a prickly cholla cactus.



A flower in bloom among a barrel cactus’s spines.



The beavertail cactus has thousands of hairlike spines.

sensitive fingers, able to detect when the soil surface has grown dangerously hot and then contracting to yank the entire plant into a lower, slightly cooler position before it’s too late.

Scientists propose that a better understanding of the tricks cactuses apply to handling relentless heat and aridity could prove all too relevant in a world of rising temperatures and water scarcity.

Not that cactuses are immune to the effects of human avidity. In late 2015, an international group of researchers reported that nearly a third of cactus species were at risk of extinction, making cactuses “among the most threatened taxonomic groups assessed to date.”

In addition to habitat loss and the conversion of cactus wilderness to agave plantations (to slake the rising demand for mezcal and tequila), the authors and other biologists cited excessive human

affection as a driver of these extinctions.

“People can be fanatic about cactuses,” said Gretchen North, a professor of biology at Occidental College. “Cactus rustling and illegal cactus collecting are real problems and a big business, and that’s one of the major causes of endangerment,” especially to rare species and lovable giants like the readily anthropomorphized saguaro.

SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Humans are not alone in their cactus love. Scientists have begun decoding the complex interplay between cactuses and pollinating bats.

Reporting recently in the journal PLOS One, Tania P. Gonzalez-Terrazas of the University of Ulm in Germany and her colleagues showed that, whereas most echolocating bats use sonar to hunt moving targets like insects, the neotropical nectar feeding bat, *Lep-*

tonycteris yerbabuenae, live-streams a volley of high-frequency clicks and cries as it nears a flowering columnar cactus.

The bat’s goal: to pinpoint the exact spot on each tubular flower where it can insert its snout, lap up the pollen-salted nectar inside and then back off again. Sure, the flower may be stationary, but a mistaken approach, a random flit to the side, could prove fatal.

“The bat is flying in the middle of a windy desert, at night, and it’s feeding from plants with really big spines,” Dr. Gonzalez-Terrazas said. “It has to be superprecise.” She’s seen the impaled evidence to prove it.

For their part, cactuses like *Pachycereus pringlei*, the Mexican giant cactus, have adapted their blooms to suit their pollinators’ GPS. Its flowers are exceptionally hard and waxy, the better to bounce a bat’s call back to its ears, Dr. Gonzalez-Terrazas said.

The symmetrical arrangement of the petals makes it relatively easy for a bat to calculate the midpoint of an echo, and hence to find the floral opening.

Other scientists have traced the cactus lineage through DNA analysis, and they have been astonished to learn how recently cactuses became a major part of the landscape. The group is relatively young, roughly 30 million to 35 million years old, compared with 86 million years for, say, sunflowers and daisies.

Behind the success of the cactus family is its prodigious dry wit, its talent for maximizing water uptake and minimizing water loss.

Cactuses are succulents, which means their tissues are fleshy and designed to hold moisture, an essential trait for surviving in a place like the Atacama Desert of Chile, where annual rainfall averages half an inch.

Cactus roots spread wide and shallow,

rather than deep, and are equipped with specialized nodules. On first exposure to moisture after a dry spell, the nodules quickly sprout a network of pale, spidery rain roots, allowing a cactus to suck up every droplet from a light desert sprinkle. After the showers, the rain roots are jettisoned but the nodules remain, poised to sprout anew.

Cactuses are shaped to minimize sun exposure. Rounded barrel cactuses have low surface area, relative to their succulent storage capacity, while columnar cactuses or prickly pears expose only their thin edges at the tops or sides to direct sunlight.

Because photosynthetic leaves are a serious source of water loss in most plants, cactuses have transferred their sugar production services to their bodies, and in many cases have transformed their leaves into spines.

Those spines serve assorted tasks. In general they are less about defense against desert animals, as is commonly believed, and more about water management. A mat of spines and hairs holds in moisture and slows the movement of evaporative air across the cactus surface. “If you get out of your shower and run naked through your yard, what’s the last part of your body that dries?” Dr. Rebman said. “Anywhere you have hair. Spines and hair do the same for a cactus.”

WATER FROM AIR

Spines can also spear water droplets from fog and shunt them down to the cactus’s roots. With the aid of its insidious claws, a detachable segment of the aptly named jumping cholla can latch onto unsuspecting passers-by, with the hope of being delivered to fresh soil in which to take root.

Cactus ribs likewise play multiple roles, allowing the plant to expand in wet times and contract in dry periods, accordion-style, helping to trap humidity between the pleats.

Yet even a plumped-up cactus is not like a cartoon keg that can be tapped for free-flowing water; the water is absorbed into gluey tissue called mucilage that in most cases is not safe to eat.

Some traditional cultures, however, cook parts of the prickly pear cactus into nopales. Others tolerate the nausea and vomiting that comes from eating the dried crowns, or “buttons,” of the peyote cactus for the sake of experiencing the hallucinatory effects of its signature ingredient, mescaline.

Another key to cactus hydro-thrill is a willingness to work the graveyard shift.

Most plants photosynthesize in the daytime, opening pores in their leaves to allow carbon dioxide gas to diffuse in, and then using the ambient solar energy to stitch the harvested carbon and water into sugary fuel.

Opening a plant’s stomata in sunlight, however, means a lot of stored water ends up evaporating — which may be fine for the average temperate-zone bush, but not for a desert dweller.

So the cactus has evolved a multi-stage approach to photosynthesis. It waits until after dark to widen the stomata on its body and absorb carbon dioxide, stashing the gas as an acid until the next morning. At that point, the radiance of the sun can be exploited for sugar-making while the succulent’s stomata stay safely shut.

Some researchers are trying to engineer this nocturnal talent into standard crops, in order to allow cultivation of marginal lands using a fraction of the water currently devoted to agriculture.

“It’s an energetically more expensive form of photosynthesis,” Dr. Edwards said. “But it’s genius.” One could even say Whitmanesque.

Heading toward a fiery plunge into Saturn’s heart

OUT THERE

The Cassini spacecraft will enter the gap between the planet and its rings

BY DENNIS OVERBYE

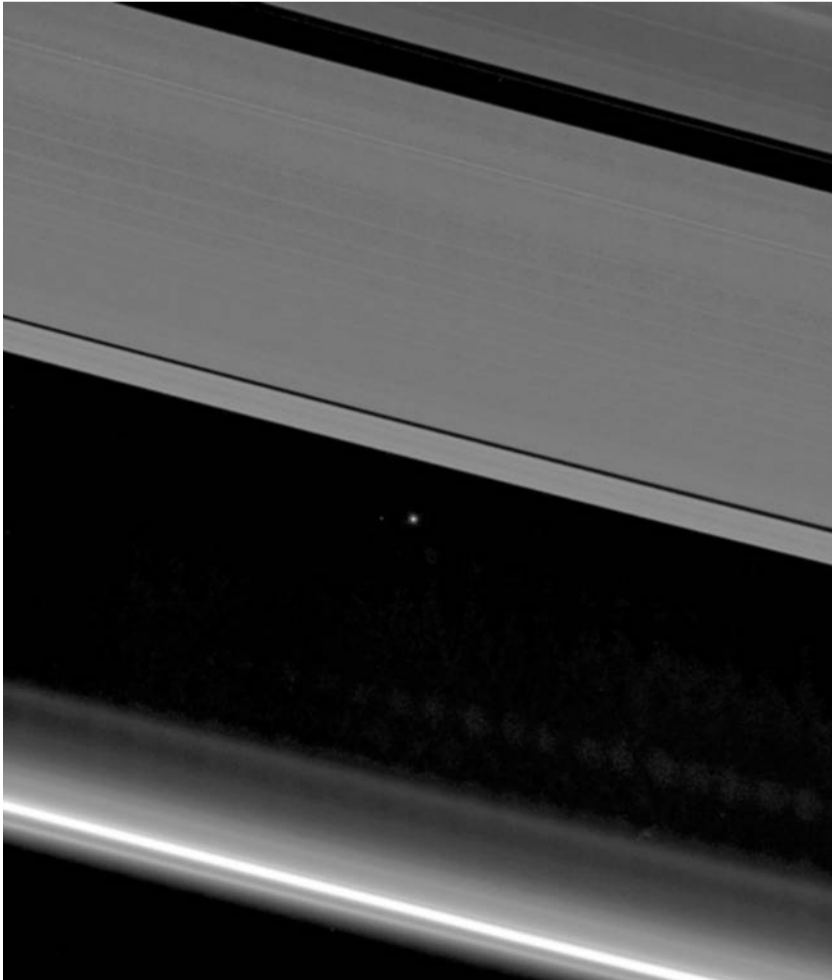
The Cassini spacecraft is about to begin its great cosmic swan dive.

On Saturday morning, the spacecraft, which has been circling Saturn and its environs for 13 years, skimmed over the hazes of Titan, the ringed planet’s biggest moon. Like a heavy hand, Titan’s gravity reached out and pulled Cassini onto a new path, downward into the narrow gap between Saturn and its innermost ring, where no human artifact has ever gone.

Cassini will penetrate that formerly inviolate space not once but 22 times, about once a week, until Sept. 15, when it is expected to crash into Saturn and be incinerated. So this summer is the last hurrah of sorts for Cassini and the team that has guided it all these years.

Two years ago, Carolyn Porco, the longtime leader of Cassini’s imaging team, teared up during an interview about the mission, an example of what humans working together could do. “It was glorious, just glorious,” she said.

She and many of her colleagues cut their teeth on the Voyager missions, which toured the worlds of the outer solar system during the 1980s and ’90s and



NASA

An image from Cassini shows Earth as a point of light between the rings of Saturn.

are still out there, dancing on the magnetic winds that guard the passage to interplanetary space. It was a generation steeped in “Star Trek,” “2001: A Space Odyssey” and optimism. Dr. Porco even labeled her online reports a captain’s log.

When Cassini was launched in 1997, President Bill Clinton was being investigated for making fund-raising calls from the White House and the internet was in its infancy. Cassini, which arrived at Saturn in July 2004, has been a worthy successor to Voyager, no slouch in racking up some four billion space miles, circling Saturn and swinging on Titan’s gravity again and again to launch itself on new courses toward strange moons.

Saturn’s little corner of the universe proved to be weirder and more diverse and promising than anyone could have predicted: the six-sided storm that hugs the planet’s North Pole; the mysterious plume-squirting moon Enceladus; and the bedazzling rings, spidery threads of ice, rock and dust — cosmic detritus shed over the ages by comets and meteorite collisions, woven by gravity into warps, braids, knots and walls, as iridescent and changeable as an oil slick.

To Cassini will go the credit for discovering what many astronomers think is the most likely place to find evidence of life beyond Earth. That would be Enceladus, which the spacecraft found is shooting plumes of salty water out of cracks in the ice that makes up its surface.

It turns out that Enceladus is mostly water — an “ocean world,” as NASA has

now labeled many of the outer solar system moons. And an examination of the plumes recently detected the presence of hydrogen, suggesting there is hydrothermal activity, that is to say, energy and heat, on the bottom of that ocean that could provide food for microbes.

Many scientists would now like to fly a probe equipped to detect microbes through a plume, to see if anything alive is taking a ride into space.

Others are not so sure. Mary Voytek, NASA’s director of astrobiology, recently threw cold water on the idea. Comparing that hydrogen gas with a stack of uneaten pizzas, she suggested

Saturn’s little corner of the universe proved to be weirder and more promising than anyone could have predicted.

there might be nothing on Enceladus to metabolize the energy.

Cassini also gets bragging rights for exploring Titan, perhaps the strangest moon in the solar system. When Voyager went by it in 1980, it was just a promising smoggy ball, the only moon in the solar system with an atmosphere thicker than Earth’s. Cassini’s Huygens probe landed in a frozen world of methane dunes and river beds, among other forms of hydrocarbon slush. Its radar has detected oily lakes of methane and ethane that might be fizzing nitrogen bubbles like newly poured champagne.

What kind of chemistry might be

slouching toward life on such a world? Along with an Enceladus probe, a boat to sail Titan’s methane seas has appeared on the wish lists of planetary scientists.

One reason scientists want to make sure Cassini is incinerated at the end of its journey is to ensure that any of its earthborn microbes do not contaminate the biotic or prebiotic worlds out there. Just in case.

With all this, it is fitting that Cassini’s end should come with a swan dive through those fabled rings.

For as long as humans have looked up with telescopes, the finest, most alluring thing they could see was the ringed planet. Galileo, the first one to see the rings, never knew what he was looking at. They have been a symbol of mystery ever since, of ineffable things just beyond our reach.

Now we have extended our reach. Nothing Cassini has done or found so far has moved the markets back here on Earth. It moved only our souls, our minds and our imaginations. It made us freer and bigger by showing how little we know and how much more room there is to expand our thoughts and dreams. How little of nature’s repertoire we have even guessed at.

On July 19, 2013, we all smiled as Cassini took a long-range portrait of Earth. The Earth popped up again peeking through the rings like an eager child looking through the blinds on April 12. That’s us, a little blue dot below the ring plane. A little world of hustlers and dreamers.

Sports

In a stadium, the worlds' coolest kindergarten

Parents are seduced
by the idea of day care that
overlooks their soccer club

On Tuesday afternoon, the players on the field were preparing for a crucial

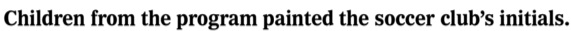


In F.C. St. Pauli's stadium, the kindergarten's building wedges between two stands. Children and parents can watch matches together.

“The club’s social responsibility for people living in the St. Pauli area is a very special topic for the club, part of

St. Paul, the neighborhood, is a working-class area, known for its music clubs and red-light district, and has been gentrifying in recent years. The team's skull

Greve and her boss, Juliane Schermuly-Petersen, joked that they were probably the only two staff members indifferent to soccer and the club. A couple of hours before the game, the two were



jackets, snapback caps, stylish glasses and interesting shoes. Coffee and some snacks appeared. Outside, near the

“When we do tours, we’ll have parents who are fans of the team come here, and they’re like, ‘My God, my kid needs to go here!’ ”

"They're quite good at screaming," she said with a smile.

Yesterday's | Jumbles: ELOPE BRICK RATHER PODIUM
Answer: The chemists ate lunch every day at the —
PERIODIC TABLE

Answers to Previous Puzzles

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		15+	3+	
				75×
			7+	
2÷				5−
2−		3+		
36×				

2	1	3	4
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1	3	4	2

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3	1	6	4	5	2

29 Had in mind

33 Rowed

36 Equal

37 Brand in the pet food aisle

Solution to

I	R	A	Q	T	R
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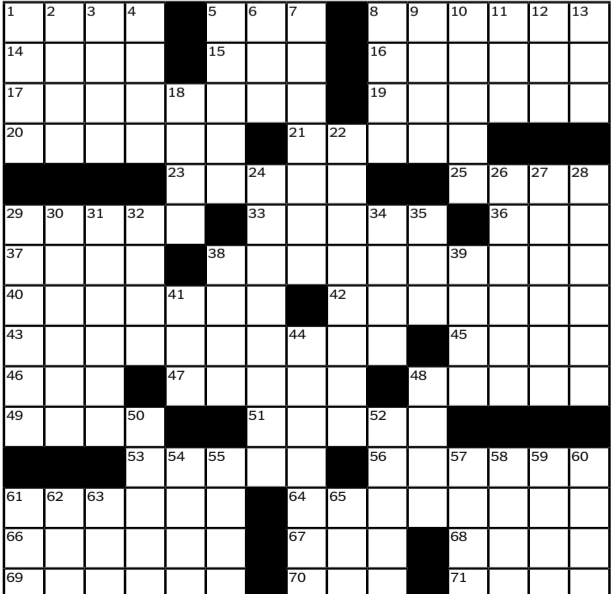
DILBERT

I'VE BEEN TELLING EMPLOYEES THAT OUR CULTURE IS OUR BEST ASSET.

DO THEY PRETEND THAT MAKES SENSE?

YES, BECAUSE WE HAVE A CULTURE OF LYING TO AVOID CONFLICT.

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[illegible]

PUZZLE BY TRENTON CHARLSON

29 City 20 miles NW of 27-Down	39 Discovery of Wilhelm Roentgen, which earned him the first Nobel Prize in Physics in 1901	55 Lines of a plane
30 Quack medicine offering	41 "So what?"	57 Light blue
31 Culmination of a challenging H.S. course	44 Second-largest Arabic-speaking city after Cairo	58 Bearskins, maybe
32 Manhattan neighborhood next to the East Village	48 Taj Mahal feature	59 River along which 56-Across is located
34 Black-hearted	50 Poetry competitions	60 It's on one side of the Urals
35 Degree of expertise in martial arts	52 Hoarse	61 Take a shot
38 West Point team	54 Way out	62 Average guy
		63 Extinct relative of the kiwi
		65 Hockey legend Bobby

Culture

China’s art for the people, by the people

BEIJING

‘Social practice’ projects address issues like accelerating urbanization

BY EMILY FENG

Above rows of assembly line workers, a mix of provocative slogans and abstract paintings adorns the corrugated metal walls of the Bernard Controls factory in southern Beijing.

In this unlikely setting, local artists and employees of the factory have spent the last six years producing artworks and performance pieces as part of a project managed by an Italian artist, Alessandro Rolandi. Called Social Sensibility, it is dedicated to injecting spontaneity and random exploration into the workplace.

“I have no artistic aspirations. I just like fresh things and to gain more knowledge,” Wu Shuqing, 37, a worker on the assembly line, said about her participation. Despite having no previous film experience, she shot a 24-hour, black-and-white film called “Sensual Love of the Fingertips,” depicting her hands performing dexterous, repetitive tasks.

Social Sensibility is just one example of a growing wave in China of so-called social practice art — work that is community-oriented, involves a high degree of participation by nonartists and has a strong focus on social issues.

The artists behind these projects, frustrated by or even indifferent to the formal art world, often operate independently of galleries and museums, produce intangible or site-specific works that are not easily displayed, and embark on long-term undertakings that sometimes challenge what can be considered art.

Elements of social practice art are not new; artists have been producing highly participatory art since the Surrealists nearly a century ago, and such work still tends to cause a splash (think Marina Abramovic’s much-talked-about “The Artist Is Present”). But in more recent years, social practice art has slowly been gaining institutional recognition in North America and Europe, where museums and art foundations have begun encouraging more community-oriented art.

In 2005, the California College of the Arts in San Francisco started offering the first fine arts program with a concentration on social practice art, and the Guggenheim recently began a new social practice initiative. Amid much uproar, the prestigious Turner Prize was awarded in 2015 to Assemble, a British collective of architects who transform neglected public spaces through community engagement.

In China, critics and artists alike say that such art taps into both past and contemporary developments.

“The sense of equality that was installed in our consciousness by socialist revolution had a huge impact on these artists. Social practice art has a socialist legacy,” said Zheng Bo, an assistant professor at the City University of Hong



PHOTOGRAPHS BY GILLES SARRIE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

A work made of cardboard by the artist Ma Yongfeng at the Bernard Controls factory in Beijing. Workers there have long participated with artists in a project called Social Sensibility.



The Italian artist Alessandro Rolandi, right, with Guillaume Bernard, chief operating officer of Bernard Controls. Mr. Rolandi manages the Social Sensibility project.

Kong whose online gallery, A Wall, documents social practice art in the greater China region. “But beginning in the 1990s, Chinese contemporary art went through an export-oriented era, addressed to a foreign audience. Now we’re going through a rebuilding of a lo-

cal art language.”

That language has largely been devoted to describing China’s rapid transition from an agricultural country to an increasingly urban one. In the early 1980s, about 80 percent of people still lived in rural areas. Today, 56 percent of

Chinese live in cities, while an additional 277 million rural residents travel to cities for work each year. National urbanization goals aim to move 100 million more people into cities by 2020.

This monumental shift of citizens and resources has raised the overall standard of living but brought with it corresponding losses, scattering families and disrupting old ways of life.

Themes of industrialization and urbanization, often symbolized by migrant workers, are not new to Chinese contemporary art. In 2001, the husband-and-wife team of Song Dong and Yin Xiuzhen created “Dancing With Migrants,” hiring migrant workers to perform choreographed movements within gallery spaces. Another internationally recognized artist, Zhang Dali, made resin casts of migrant workers’ bodies that were hung upside down from rafters in his 2003 series “Chinese Offspring.”

“The subjects weren’t so much participants as they were treated like props to be used in the art pieces,” says Madeline Eschenburg, a doctoral candidate at the University of Pittsburgh who studies contemporary Chinese art.

By contrast, today’s social practice artists engage with their subjects as collaborators, placing a premium on building a sense of community by attempting to counter the monotony of urban

rhythms and ease the strains that contemporary life has put on interpersonal relationships.

“As society goes through demolition and urbanization, the biggest changes happen on the level of human relationships,” said the Shanghai-based artist Chen Yun. “Trust, care and mutual exchange: These are all created by how you see human relationships.”

Critics and artists say such art taps into the past and present.

For the last three years, Ms. Chen has been assembling a visual and textual record of Dinghaiqiao, a historic industrial district in Shanghai now on the verge of being demolished, a task that links her work to sociological research and investigative journalism. The interviews she has conducted inspired her to begin a “mutual aid” society staffed by volunteers who provide art lessons, cooking classes and discussion groups for community residents.

Yet she stresses that her project does not do the same sort of work as nongovernmental organizations. “We are not here to provide a community with services but rather to encourage collaboration, interaction and the accu-

mulation of knowledge,” she said.

Through this continuing interaction, artists hope to have a positive effect on the lives of their collaborators.

“Art has given me self-confidence,” Li Baoyuan, 51, a resident of Shijiezi, a remote village in the northwestern Chinese province of Gansu, said by telephone. He was one of the first participants in “Fly Together,” a project managed by the artists Jin Le, a native of Shijiezi, and Qin Ga, which brings in artists to work with local residents in making site-specific artworks using local materials.

The project has attracted positive attention from county officials, who installed solar-powered street lighting in the village in 2010, as well as other artists, who in 2013 donated money to provide the village with running water. In October, Mr. Li came to Beijing as part of a talk about “Fly Together.”

“Art is the reason I am able to stand in front of you,” he told the audience. “Art is what has allowed me to meet so many talented people.”

Other artists, seeking to reconnect with hometowns they abandoned before those towns disappear, have sought to bridge the urban and rural worlds.

For the last five years, Chao Hewen has been traveling between Beijing and his hometown for his project “In Transit.” The village, located less than a mile from the capital of Yunnan Province, Kunming, has been pulled into the city’s orbit in recent years. Mr. Chao has tried to mirror the outbound migration that has emptied the village by bringing in a small group of artists each year to create works like “Intermittence,” a short film about women from the Naxi minority group, and “Bridge,” a sculptural piece assembled by villagers out of borrowed wooden chairs.

“Whether in villages or cities, everyone experiences issues of demolition, rapid changes to our communities, questions of memory,” Mr. Chao said. “But within Beijing art circles, we get caught up in our false problems, whereas in the countryside, we can have more authentic experiences and adjust our old ways of thinking anew.”

Not everything connected with these projects goes smoothly. The open-ended nature of social practice art means it is plagued by miscommunication and logistical glitches, its makers frequently facing skepticism from local people.

During the first year of “In Transit,” the Beijing-based artist He Congyue tried to gather the entire village for a portrait, but only about a tenth of the villagers showed up. Eventually, however, the photograph caused a buzz in the village when it was displayed, and the artist went door to door inviting residents to pose again. This time, twice as many people came, some even taking time off from their work elsewhere to travel home and participate.

It is precisely that kind of slow progress and relationship-building that is at the heart of social practice art, said Mr. Rolandi of Social Sensibility.

“I don’t think the art itself is really the point,” he said of his own project. “Radicalness and subversiveness today means creating something that grows and doesn’t just shock.”

‘Little Foxes’ with twice the sharp teeth

THEATER REVIEW

Two stars alternate roles in a nimble Broadway revival of the 1939 drama

BY ALEXIS SOLOSKI

Regina Giddens is a flower of Southern womanhood. That flower is a Venus flytrap. In “The Little Foxes,” Manhattan Theater Club’s nimble, exhilarating revival of Lillian Hellman’s 1939 drama, Regina coerces, deceives, manipulates and maybe even murders. How graceful she is, how charming. And how carnivorous.

Hellman’s play, which sent the author bushwhacking through what she called “the giant tangled time-jungle” of childhood memory and family legend, has never quite held the stature it deserves. The Times review of its Broadway premiere ran with the dampening subhead, “Stinging Drama About Rugged Individualism Provides a Number of Good Acting Parts.” How nice. Is the play too tidy, too well made, too clear-cut in its morality to fight for a place in the first rank of American theater? Maybe. But it comes pretty close. And very well armed.

In Regina, whose individualism is refined rather than rugged, Hellman created one of the stage’s great anti-heroines and a glide bomb of a role. Now, in Daniel Sullivan’s production at the Samuel J. Friedman Theater, two actresses get to detonate it. At alternating performances, Laura Linney (“Time Stands Still,” “The Big C”) and Cynthia Nixon (“Rabbit Hole,” “Sex and the City”) swap the roles of Regina and Birdie, Regina’s wilting sister-in-law. Regina’s is the flashy part, Birdie’s the devastating one.

Set in small-town Alabama in 1900, the play opens at the end of a dinner for a Yankee industrialist (David Alford). Regina and her brothers, Ben Hubbard (Michael McKean) and Oscar Hubbard (Darren Goldstein), are nouveau riche, but they’d like to be richer. Ben and Oscar have the necessary capital to partner in a new cotton mill, but Regina, who has been denied any money of her own, must persuade her ailing husband (Richard Thomas) to make the deal. So she sends her goody-goody daughter, Alexandra (Francesca Carpanini), up to Baltimore to trundle him home from the hospital.

The play grabs its title from a verse in the Song of Solomon about foxes despoiling vineyards, and Hellman fills the play with appropriately ravaging characters: Ben (played with wicked pleasure by Mr. McKean), shrewd in his striving; Oscar, merely brutish; and Oscar’s son, Leo (Michael Benz), inept at just about everything, villainy included. When Ben gives a speech about how people like the Hubbards “will own this country some day,” unhappy gasps ripple through the audience.

Regina, however, has greater ambition and less opportunity to satisfy it than any of her kin. As she tells her husband, when she was a little girl “there was so little place for what I wanted. I wanted the world.” She still wants it.

But how can she get it? Her father cut her out of his will (the reasons are explained in Hellman’s unnecessary prequel, “Another Part of the Forest”) and her husband keeps his bankbook to himself. Yet she isn’t undefended. She has beauty and wit enough to turn her gifts against the men who limit and underestimate her.

“You’d get farther with a smile, Regina,” Ben says.

So Regina does smile. And that smile



SARA KRULWICH/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Cynthia Nixon as Regina Giddens with, from left, Richard Thomas, Michael McKean, Darren Goldstein and Michael Benz.

is weaponized. No wonder Tallulah Bankhead, Bette Davis and Elizabeth Taylor all clamored to play her.

By now you’re probably wondering which configuration you should see. With Ms. Nixon as Regina and Ms. Linney as Birdie, or the other way around? Well, you should see it twice. When top-drawer actors bestride the stage in a tremendous role and some truly killer gowns, it’s time to clear the calendar. But if your free time and disposable income are not exactly

Hubbardesque, then see Ms. Linney as Regina and Ms. Nixon as Birdie, roles in which both actors are asked to play more against type and the performances are richer for it.

In most roles, Ms. Nixon has a steely quality; Ms. Linney’s affect is more yielding. Ms. Nixon plays Regina’s deviousness from the start, which is a treat, but Ms. Linney keeps it concealed for a while, which makes for a stinging surprise. When it comes to “melly mush silly” Birdie, bullied and

beaten by her husband, Ms. Linney uses her sweetness to poignant effect, while Ms. Nixon’s heartbreaking trills and flutters layer Birdie’s pain with a complicating self-loathing.

Then again, the play doesn’t shift radically from one cast list to the next to the next. Mr. Sullivan’s confident production doesn’t deny melodrama, but it prefers psychological and social detail over Southern gothic fripperies. (Scott Pask’s fraying, elegant set and Jane Greenwood’s shrewd costumes,

with ruffles for Birdie and a sleeker silhouette for Regina, also reflect this emphasis.) It asks both actresses to make the roles more than villain and victim, which the play allows. You might wish that Hellman had written the faithful retainer parts with greater breadth, but Charles Turner and particularly Caroline Stefanie Clay play them with nuance.

Why have the actors switch in the roles at all? Well, it’s a nifty marketing gimmick and a chance for each woman to display her collarbones and her range. (If meaner, more rivalrous motives are in play, let’s hope all will be revealed in a future season of “Feud.”) But maybe there’s a weightier idea at work here. Regina shows how wicked a woman can become when she steps out of line, Birdie how broken when she doesn’t. To have these actresses switch from night to night stresses that in a world like this, women can’t win.

Yet Regina does. Unlike her peers — the Heddas, the Clytemnestras, the Lady Macbeths — Regina is a woman whose comeuppance never comes. Yes, she has to sacrifice some essential femininity, rejecting wifely and maternal instincts. She doesn’t seem to mind. Alexandra suggests that Regina’s misdeeds will haunt her, but neither Ms. Linney nor Ms. Nixon plays her as especially hauntable. Loathe her politics and her methods — Hellman certainly did — but admire her flair and her grit and her second-act dress.

Regina is even magnanimous in victory, telling her disapproving daughter, “Do what you want; think what you want; go where you want.” Regina will. If the play leaves her alone, it also leaves her finally in command of her body and her fortune and her future. That’ll get her farther than a smile.

Drama spun into laughter

NASHVILLE

Paramore’s singer wanted a respite, but she and the band are rocking again

BY JOE COSCARELLI

Hayley Williams needed a break from “Paramore hair.”

For more than a decade, while she established herself as one of the most dynamic mainstream rock singers of her generation, Ms. Williams was recognizable for her dramatic razor-cut bangs and bobs in bursts of violent color, typically the loudest synthetic shades of red, orange and pink. “I had a haircut that could have murdered you,” she said of the look that helped make her an icon of the mall-punk Warped Tour set.

Yet as her band, Paramore, worked to transcend its restrictive genre dogmas across four increasingly ambitious albums, taking the angsty pop punk of the Myspace moment to the Grammys and the Billboard charts largely on the strength of Ms. Williams’s voice, the singer, now 28, began to feel beholden to a visual shtick.

Last year, staring down a deep depression amid more personnel changes in a band plagued by them — and questioning herself under the hefty burdens of adulthood — Ms. Williams opted for “a blank slate,” she said, her currently white-blond locks further minimized under a beanie.

“You can run on the fumes of being a teenager for as long as you want, but eventually life hits you really hard,” Ms. Williams, a mighty presence who barely cracks five feet, explained last month, speaking for the first time about the tumultuous period since Paramore last released an album, in 2013. “I didn’t even know if we were going to make another record,” she said. “There was a moment when I didn’t even want it to happen. Then it was like, I want it to happen, but I don’t know how we’re going to do it.”

Paramore, somehow, pulled it off again. On May 12, the band will release “After Laughter,” its fifth LP, introducing another lineup — each Paramore album has featured a different combination of members around Ms. Williams — and, more notably, a new sound. Instead of the meaty, distorted power chords and hyperactive riffs of its adolescence, Paramore has dipped into cleaner, more rhythmic and synth-kissed textures of the ’70s and ’80s, owing to recent obsessions with Talking Heads, Tom Tom Club, Cyndi Lauper and Blondie.

But while the group has long functioned in its own hybrid milieu — “too rock for pop and too pop for rock,” said the guitarist and Ms. Williams’s chief songwriting partner, Taylor York — Paramore returns to a Top 40 landscape even less hospitable to guitars than the one it left on an idiosyncratic high note. (“Ain’t It Fun,” which won a Grammy for best rock song, was also the band’s highest-charting crossover single.)

In pop, a throwback ’80s sound has since been tried with varying degrees of faithfulness and success by the likes of Taylor Swift, Carly Rae Jepsen and Jason Derulo, but has not, of late, been credibly executed by a band. Paramore, though, may be suited to this moment: Ms. Williams, cartoon hair or not, remains the focus, and her nimble melodies and sneakily huge pop hooks are as crisp and magnetic as ever, un beholden to genre walls.

As a frontwoman, Ms. Williams’s shadow of influence has only grown during her break from music, with the most vibrant rock, especially in offshoots of



ERIC RYAN ANDERSON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

From left, the drummer Zac Farro, the singer Hayley Williams and the guitarist Taylor York of Paramore. The group, which has had both legal and roster issues, is about to release its fifth album.

punk, coming increasingly from female-led bands who aren’t afraid of a chorus.

Bethany Cosentino, the lead singer of Best Coast, called Ms. Williams an industry mentor, despite being her elder by two years. “She’s the most humble person I’ve ever known,” Ms. Cosentino said. “She’s a major superstar, but on any given day in Nashville you’ll see her in the back at a show. She’s still true to her punk roots.”

Ms. Williams demurred at suggestions that for a new generation of female musicians, she represents what Gwen Stefani of No Doubt and Shirley Manson of Garbage were for her, insisting that she is the one inspired by much younger acts like Cherry Glazerr, Tacocat and Bleached.

But she also recalled her determination when Paramore started in a male-dominated scene. “If we were booked on a bill with all dudes that were twice as old as us I wanted to be better than any of them,” Ms. Williams said. “I didn’t care if they had a penis or not. I had to be great at my job.”

Musically, her band “can do whatever we want and then when Hayley gets on it, that’s what makes it Paramore,” Mr. York, 27, said, adding that his recent guitar tones and phrasings had also been inspired by Afrobeat and other international sounds. “We’ve gotten to a point with our new music where we don’t really want to headbang anymore.”

In addition to a fresh direction, “After Laughter” is a partial reunion for the group, which, during recording, wel-

comed back the drummer and founding member Zac Farro. Formed in 2004 as a teenage garage band in Franklin, Tenn., Paramore fractured nearly seven years ago when Mr. Farro and his older brother, Josh, then the main songwriter, quit in a fit of acrimony, having dubbed the band “a manufactured product of a major label” that “became all about Hayley.” (Paramore’s 2011 damage-control interview with MTV is an excruciating document of an awkward period.)

The guitarist calls them “too rock for pop and too pop for rock.”

Mr. Farro’s homecoming developed gradually after a personal rekindling with Mr. York, his childhood best friend, that became a necessity because the pair kept running into each other socially.

“Every teenage year that I lived was in this band, on tour,” said Mr. Farro, 26, a lovable goof whose mellow presence balances that of his more high-strung bandmates. “I needed a reset button.”

Carlos de la Garza, who worked as an audio engineer on “After Laughter” and its predecessor, called Mr. York and Mr. Farro, who spent his time away traveling New Zealand and making his own music, “true kindred spirits.”

What resulted from that refreshed partnership were many jubilant, even danceable, instrumental tracks that Ms. Williams then flipped on their head.

“There was a little bit of a dark side creeping in to Hayley’s psyche,” Mr. de la Garza said. “Something was eating at her, and she was able to use a lot of that as fuel for lyrics.”

Despite the joyful, collaborative energy that stemmed from the reconciliation with Mr. Farro, Ms. Williams agreed that “there was a dark cloud” over the writing and recording process, stemming from relationship issues both personal and professional.

In the last two years, “A lot of life happened,” said Ms. Williams, who married a fellow musician, Chad Gilbert of New Found Glory, last February. Just before that, Paramore announced that it had parted with its longtime bassist, Jeremy Davis, who in a lawsuit invoked claims that have long dogged the band, and especially Ms. Williams.

While Mr. Davis contends in court papers that he was a creative partner, entitled to additional profits from songwriting royalties, merchandise and live shows, pre-emptive filings on behalf of Ms. Williams noted that she is the only member officially signed to Atlantic Records, leaving the rest of Paramore to be paid as at-will employees. (Lawyers for the singer noted that “because she wanted to foster a feeling of camaraderie within the band, at her direction, the band members’ salaries included a portion of Williams’ earnings.”)

Derek Crownover, a lawyer for Mr. Davis, said in a statement: “Jeremy Davis did not leave the band,” adding that the bassist “did not initiate the lawsuit

either.” While the case is ongoing, Mr. Crownover expressed hope for an amicable settlement soon.

“Again?” Ms. Williams asked herself as she pondered the group’s fate. “I prayed until my knees bled, pretty much,” she said, acknowledging that Paramore has at times felt more like a soap opera than a band.

“We were down another member — same old story almost from Day 1,” she continued. “It made me question everything — *am I doing something wrong?* You read things that people say about you and eventually you just think, ‘Oh, I must be some kind of diva bitch.’ I know that’s not me, but it caused a lot of self-doubt.”

Ms. Williams, never one for love songs, channeled her disquiet into an album preoccupied with betrayal, disappointment and regret. “Hard Times,” the opening song and first single, begins with lines like,

*All that I want
is a hole in the ground
You can tell me when it’s all right
for me to come out.*

Elsewhere, she sings, “I can’t think of getting old/it only makes me want to die,” while other album highlights are titled “Forgiveness” (sample lyric: “I just can’t do it yet”), “Fake Happy” and “Grudges.”

“I couldn’t imagine putting something on an album that says ‘life’s great, everything’s cool, party with me,’” Ms. Williams said. And it’s true that despite long-running accusations of major-label

meddling in Paramore’s career, the band has written its own often-bitter songs across three straight platinum albums without fiddling from the pop machine.

Though its members said their record label has previously tried to pair them with hitmakers of the moment, “We’ve somehow earned our freedom,” said Mr. York, Paramore’s softest spoken member. “I can’t imagine getting up there and playing a Max Martin song,” he said. “At that point we might as well just stop.”

Now, as Paramore moves from re-establishing its foundation in private to the public glare of an obsessive, impatient fan base, its members are openly anxious about how it will be portrayed and received. One recent night, the trio attended a hockey game for its hometown Nashville Predators, something they hadn’t done as a group since childhood. Exceedingly gracious to all who recognized them, there remained a nervous but endearing energy among the band, not unlike recently reconciled exes around skeptical old friends.

Yet in quiet moments, as Mr. York, Mr. Farro and Ms. Williams picked food out of each other’s teeth and retreated to the safety of inside jokes, they couldn’t help but seem downright content. “This is what you go through hard times for, so you can have these moments where you’re proud of yourself, proud of your choices and your friends,” Ms. Williams said.

“I have a public diary of my life,” she added, “and I feel useful because of it.”

The Jewish holidays — all of them

BOOK REVIEW

MY JEWISH YEAR: 18 HOLIDAYS, ONE WONDERING JEW. By Abigail Pogrebin. 326 pp. *Frig Tree Books*. \$22.95.

BY DAVID GREGORY

According to the writer Leon Wieseltier, the greatest scandal among American Jews is illiteracy. We simply don’t know enough — not nearly enough — about who we are and what Jews believe.

During lunch at a Washington, D.C., steakhouse more than a decade ago, Wieseltier encouraged my own Torah study and efforts to deepen my faith by admonishing, “Who are we to let this 4,000-year-old tradition slip through our fingers?” The journalist Abigail Pogrebin, who interviewed Wieseltier for her book about Jewish identity, “Stars of David,” takes his *cri de coeur* seriously. In “My Jewish Year,” she becomes curious about how Jews search for meaning — “something tugged at me, telling me there was more to feel than I’d felt, more to understand than I knew” — and decides to celebrate all the Jewish holidays of the calendar year, even the ones she’s never heard of.

She calls herself a “wondering” Jew, and her exploration is lively, funny and

honest. It is a relatable, immersive experience that pays homage to “The Year of Living Biblically,” by A. J. Jacobs, who writes the foreword. She is a holiday pilgrim uninterested in journeying into Orthodoxy (she attends a Reform synagogue) but intent on reaching others like her, indeed like so many secular American Jews, who “do not connect their Jewish identity to Judaism.”

Pogrebin lowers her shoulder and goes straight through the Jewish calendar with an emphasis on doing more so that she might feel more. Whether partaking in all-night study before Shavuot (when the Bible says Moses received the Torah at Mount Sinai) or blowing the shofar during Elul, the period of self-reflection and repentance before Rosh Hashana (the Jewish new year), she uncovers the small detail (single malt Scotch is the festive drink of choice for Simchas Torah, when Jews celebrate the annual completion of reading the Torah) and the erotic one: “Sukkot is about *shtupping*” (Yiddish for both “pushing” and “having sex”), one rabbi tells her, describing the sexual aspect of thrusting the *lulav* and handling the lemon-like *etrogs*.

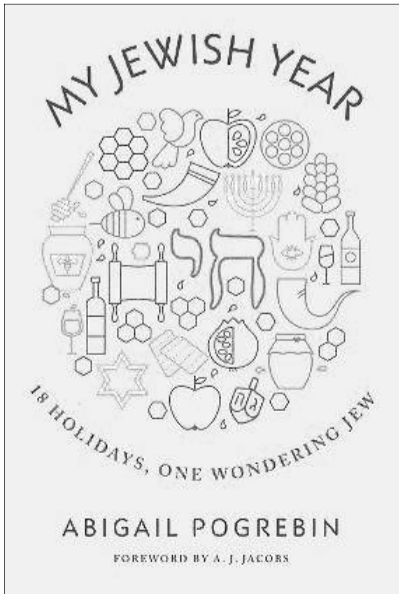
More substantively, Pogrebin brings both curiosity and candor to her search. During a fast on the first day of January, the 10th of Tevet, marking the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem



THE FORWARD

Abigail Pogrebin decided to celebrated even the Jewish holidays she had never heard of.

by the Babylonians, she grabs hold of the larger point of skipping a meal: “Our tradition doesn’t care about whether you’re sated, but about what you do.” This is a day of sacrifice to focus the mind on helping others rather than satisfying ourselves. Pogrebin strives valiantly throughout the year, learning (she interviewed



more than 60 rabbis and scholars) and breaking stereotypes of our tradition, as when she blesses a woman sitting next to her at a feminist Seder on Passover.

When she falls short, she levels with the reader. Despite her efforts, after the introspection and repentance of the High Holy Days Pogrebin describes

feeling bereft. Like Morales from the musical “A Chorus Line,” who sings about feeling “nothing,” Pogrebin writes: “I didn’t feel changed. There was no revelation.” The admission underscores a truth about deepening one’s faith and observance: It’s hard. This is where “My Jewish Year” occasionally disappoints. Pogrebin and I are both journalists and Jewish seekers who have written about the experience. But what happens after the pilgrimage and the book? The spiritual work is just getting started and is fraught with obstacles. Living up to one’s faith is never easy, and opening your heart to the spiritual touch takes time. Often what you are supposed to feel and supposed to do get in the way. I think changing your life through faith is more like a ladder than a year of forced ritual.

Indeed, defining ritual observance as adhering to a holiday calendar offers a limited perspective. Ask many in the Orthodox community for whom spiritual boredom is a product of rote observance. To me, the essential question is, Where is God? For Pogrebin, as for many Jews, this is a complicated question — she is a believer, “not in God as all-powerful, but in God as protector and healer.” The question of God is, in my view, one we must spend more time exploring if we are to find meaning and purpose as a community

beyond culture and debates over Israel. I prefer going deeper into Jewish liturgy to celebrating the new year for trees.

Still, this pilgrimage is a serious and important one. Pogrebin writes poignantly of connecting the dots of Jewish identity for her children through a Yom Kippur prayer or a Passover debate she devised about the extent of Pharaoh’s culpability. This is a goal shared by many Jewish parents who want their kids to understand that being Jewish is about more than a gift on Hanukkah or culture alone.

We also share a love for the Jewish Sabbath — which she calls a time of “deliberate intermission.” Shabbat is for me the most spiritual and peaceful of Jewish holidays, however imperfectly both Pogrebin and I observe it.

Reflecting on the lessons of her experience, Pogrebin quotes Rabbi Peter Rubinstein: All of us create “something sacred in our lives.” After her Jewish year, Pogrebin may accept or reject aspects of her tradition, but at least she knows more about it. This is what Wieseltier was talking about. He wrote in his book “Kaddish,” “Do not overthrow the customs that have made it all the way to you.”

David Gregory is the author of “How’s Your Faith?” and a political analyst for CNN.

TRAVEL

Exploring a town and nurturing a friendship

BY JAMI ATTENBERG

We met in Toronto, Viola Di Grado and I. We were attending a literary festival, and I saw her across the room in a crowded hospitality suite at a harbor-front hotel, amid all the writers eagerly sucking the free liquor. She was 15 years my junior, an Italian baby goth princess: pin thin, long blond hair, a childlike face, wearing dark eyeliner and a dramatic black Victorian gown. I immediately thought: *Her, I must know.* We talked briefly and had an instant ease around each other, a major triumph among writers. (Most of us are inherently awkward creatures.) The next day we became friends on Facebook. It is always good to have a new contact in a foreign country, I remember thinking at the time. What more could I expect from this stranger I met for only a few moments?

But over the four years that passed since we met, Viola became more than that. Even though we communicated only via the internet, having long, funny, intimate chats, she became a confidante (and, more recently, with my latest book, my Italian translator). I've read and loved her novels, which revolve around young, unconventional women who have complicated relationships with reality, and are often otherworldly. My favorite, "Hollow Heart," is written from the perspective of a ghost, a suicide victim who is haunting the living.

Viola is, predictably, wise beyond her years; emotionally, I am permanently trapped in my early 30s, so together we make a good friend match. I knew someday we would meet again; it was just a question of when and where.

Then, last fall, my Italian publisher arranged a tour for me for my most recent book, starting in Milan and ending at my favorite Italian bookstore, Modusvivendi Libreria, in Palermo in Sicily. Viola is from Catania, on the opposite side of the island, about two and half hours away by bus. She agreed to meet me for two days, with two nights of readings at the store — a long time to spend with someone you have met only for a few minutes. Still, I loved the idea of an emotional adventure, taking a risk. We would see if our brief meeting four years

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before was a fluke or if our May-December friendship was built to last.

I'd been to Palermo before, in 2014, to visit the same bookstore. My time there had been limited to one night and one day, and most of my exploring had involved hunting for street food along its back alleys. Palermo is a highly walkable city, with cobblestone streets that seem eternally damp, and, at least by daylight, safe. A day's amble there seemed like a fine waste of time at that moment, though I didn't leave Palermo knowing much more about it than when I had arrived. But now was my chance to get to know the city better.

Viola was to be my true guide. And Viola had opinions about Palermo, not to mention Italy in general. For me, the best way to get to know a city is the same as with a human being: learn both the flaws and the charms. I cannot fully love something until I know both. To my eye Palermo had seemed like a pretty, crumbling city, perhaps careless in its beauty. Viola saw something else.

"It's a Jackson Pollock painting in city form," she said over coffee the next morning, before we set out on our adventure for the day. "There is an abstract quality in the structure of its everyday life, in the way cars and people and everything interact, and it's very violent and unpredictable. Like, you never know, a car could hit you while you're walking on the sidewalk."

I found this thrilling — not the getting hit by a car part, but the unpredictability. Anything could happen. After 18 years in New York City, I long always for a surprise.

Viola suggested we spend our morning visiting the Capuchin Catacombs. We left our lodgings, taking the pedestrian path of the city's oldest street, Via Vittorio Emanuele, home to many historic buildings as well as beautifully weathered, balconied apartments and tourist shops. We passed the broad and impressive Palermo Cathedral, its many towers softened by the occasional palm tree. And then we walked beneath the Porta Nuova, a triumphal arch that dates to the 1500s, and I felt as if I were leaving one part of the city for another.

We arrived at the catacombs, their exterior a plain, graying building with a small plaza and parking lot. Nothing seemed suspect. We entered, and walked down to the depths of the building.



LOOK, I HAVEN'T SEEN it all, but I've seen a lot. And I was definitely not expecting hundreds of mummified corpses hanging in airless, limestone corridors beneath the city streets. I let out a genuine noise of surprise, a mumbled, "Oh my God." The corpses — 1,252 in total — were all dressed in centuries-old attire. Viola, of course, was delighted by my shock.

A gift from one writer friend to another: a genuinely memorable experience, one that could be recounted over

cocktails for years to come.

The catacombs, first founded in the 16th century as a place to house deceased friars, were the most haunted place I've ever been. I sensed a specific energy in the particles in the air; there was a thickness to it, as if they were parting and allowing us in as we moved through the space, pushing us along. Practically every inch of wall space was decorated with a dead body. There was no downtime for the mind.

Just when I had gotten over the shock



PHOTOGRAPHS BY SUSAN WRIGHT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Clockwise from left: Porto Nuova, an arch that dates to the 1500s in Palermo in Sicily; pastries and cakes at Pasticceria Cappello; and the Fontana Pretoria.



her better. I looked closely. She looked perfectly human, but her skin was purple. There was a small bow in her hair. A hundred stories blossomed in my head about a purple child sleeping in a glass case forever.

There could be no more surprises left, I was certain, but oh, no, there was one more delight waiting for us. For around the corner was a nook of female forms hanging high on the wall, with words painted next to them. Viola translated: "They are virgins, they follow the lamb" — they had kept themselves pure for God. We both smirked. "Why is it the women always have to be the virgins?" I said. "Stuck sexless for eternity, that doesn't seem fair at all." Outside I bought a postcard of the virgins, so I could remember them. As if there was any chance of forgetting them.

"I will take you to eat something good now," said Viola, as we wormed our way through back streets, clotheslines overhead, passing a small pup watching the world go by in a sunny window, until we found the Pasticceria Cappello, a gleaming bakery overlooking Palermo.

As we ate hazelnut cake, Viola told me the most salacious story about the Italian publishing industry — one final surprise — thus sealing our friendship forever. Surprise me and then feed me, that's all I desire.

Have binoculars, will travel

IN TRANSIT: Q. AND A.

BY CHARU SURI

In September 2015, Noah Strycker entered the Guinness Book of World Records by besting a British couple, Ruth Miller and Alan Davies, who in 2008 tracked 4,341 species of birds in a year. Mr. Strycker tracked 6,042 species and told his story on the Audubon Society blog, *Birding Without Borders*.

Mr. Strycker, 31, has climbed trees around the globe in pursuit of birds like the red-billed starling or black-breasted thrush. His 40-liter backpack is filled with items like Leica 10x42 Ultravid HD-Plus binoculars, malaria pills and water-purifying tablets.

Following are edited excerpts from an interview with him:

What's the most adventurous thing you've done to spot a bird?

I've driven a Zodiac boat in Antarctica, crashed through leech-infested forests in India and stayed awake for nearly four straight days during the Norwegian summer solstice. In central Peru, I got up at 2 one morning and drove up a desolate mountain. The road was so bad it ripped the rear bumper off our van and left us mired in mud with two flat tires and a dead battery in the middle of nowhere. But we saw a spectacular golden-backed mountain tanager, so the trip was worthwhile.

What equipment do you always take?

All you really need to bird the world is a pair of pants, a passport and binoculars.



VIA NOAH STRYCKER

Noah Strycker travels minimally, with only a small backpack on his birding trips.

I travel with a small backpack, so I never have to check any luggage. On the ground, I always have a pen, a plastic spoon, an SD card reader, some toilet paper and a compact LED flashlight.

What are the best places to spot bird migrations in the United States?

The Gulf Coast of Texas in late April is a haven for songbirds, as are Magee Marsh in Ohio and Point Pelee in Ontario in May. For migratory birds, New Jersey's Cape May offers ample opportunities in both spring and fall. Sandhill cranes flock toward the Platte River in Nebraska during their migrations. Point

Reyes in California is a mecca for rare birds during spring and fall. But the beauty of birds is that they are everywhere, so you can see migratory birds wherever you live.

What are some of the best places to spot several species at once?

Try Ecuador or Uganda. Both are packed with an enormous diversity of landscapes and wildlife. Keep in mind, though, that birding is about more than just running up a list. I've enjoyed places like Chile, Iceland and Turkey, even though they have a bit less diversity than the tropics.

Finding a travel agent who's right for you

IN TRANSIT: TRAVEL TIPS

BY SHIVANI VORA

Finding the right travel agent is like finding the right doctor, according to David Kolner, who oversees the travel agent membership program for Virtuoso, a network of more than 15,000 agents globally. "This may sound extreme — after all, they're only booking your travel — but your leisure time is one of your most valuable assets, so why would you trust just anyone with it?" he said.

Here, he shares his tips on how to find the perfect agent:

DO YOUR HOMEWORK Finding the right agent requires research. Start by asking friends and relatives for recommendations — if people you trust are happy with their travels, Mr. Kolner said, chances are you will be, too. You can also

ask for recommendations on Facebook. In addition, Virtuoso has a catalog on its site of 4,000 advisers; you can search by geographic location, areas of specialization and languages spoken.

FIGURING OUT YOUR NEEDS Do you want someone who is a specialist in a particular destination to assist with planning one specific trip, such as a gorilla trekking adventure in Rwanda? Or are you looking for someone who can help plan your travel for years to come, effectively someone who becomes a specialist in you? These can be the same person, Mr. Kolner said, but knowing what you want from the outset may lead you to a different adviser.

HOW INVOLVED DO YOU WANT TO BE? Some advisers like to plan every aspect of a trip, from booking airfare to making dinner reservations, while some are happy to offer a second opinion about your own research. Some prefer phone interac-

tion, while others are comfortable conversing via email or text. It's important, Mr. Kolner said, to work with an adviser who matches your travel planning personality. You can find out if advisers are happy to hold your hand or leave you alone by asking them directly.

DON'T BE SCARED OFF BY FEES It's not uncommon for advisers to charge a fee for their services, which could range from \$50 to several hundred dollars, depending on the complexity of the trip. Mr. Kolner said charging fees was a growing practice because advisers spent several hours planning their clients' trips and would have difficulty making a sustainable living without being compensated for their time. "You are paying for an adviser's knowledge and for the perks they're able to score for you," he said. The extras advisers can get their clients at no cost could include room upgrades, early check-ins and late checkouts at hotels and airport transfers.



Samuel L. Jackson

TAILORING LEGENDS SINCE 1945

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